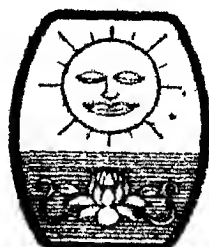




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**JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**



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**Persons in the Trinity  
Inter-Personal Preaching  
Holistic Person in India  
An Indian Church**

**JANUARY 1986**

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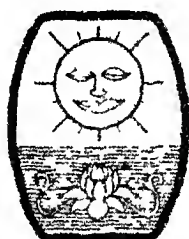
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A Pastoral Visit  
A Call to Conversion and  
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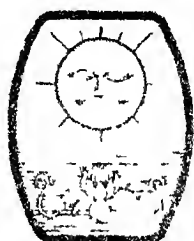
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The New Indian Blessed  
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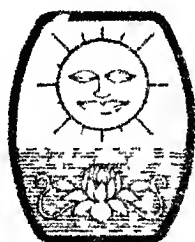
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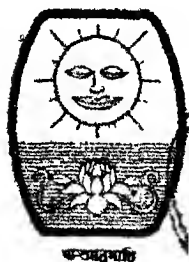
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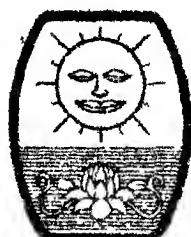
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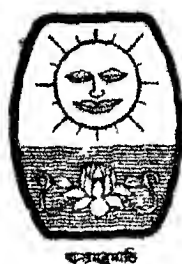
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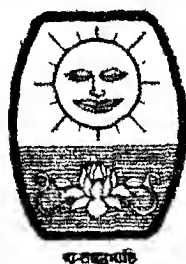
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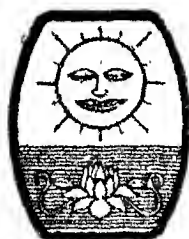
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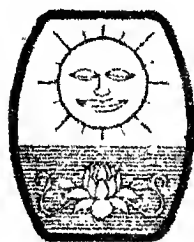
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# Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION



वन्द्यमयि

The Laity in the Church  
The Synod—One Year After  
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DECEMBER 1986

# VIDYAJYOTI

## JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION



Volume L

January to December 1986

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# Vidyajyoti

## JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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### Editorial

#### **The Pope, the Council, the Indian Church**

We begin this month the fiftieth volume of VIDYAJYOTI. Its Golden Jubilee year, however, will fall in 1987, as for various reasons two of the early volumes were half-yearly. The Journal was started with the title *THE CLERGY MONTHLY* in January 1938, by the inspiration and under the patronage of the most Rev. L. Mathias, S.D.B., Archbishop of Madras, "as a lasting and living souvenir of the National Eucharistic Congress (in Madras)" (Vol. 1 p. 1). From April 1940 St. Mary's College, Kurseong, later Vidyajyoti, Delhi, assumed the responsibility of editing, while the burden of printing and publishing the Journal was shouldered by the Catholic Press, Ranchi, and its offshoot, the Xavier Publications.

Our readers are aware of the fact that from this month onwards the responsibility for publishing the Journal is transferred to the newly formed *Vidyajyoti Educational and Welfare Society (VIEWS)*. The Journal will therefore be printed and published from Delhi, in close collaboration with the Editorial Board. At this moment of transfer, we cannot fail to pay homage to the immense service rendered by the Catholic Press, Ranchi, and the Xavier Publications. For 46 years, in times of war and of peace, through the many vagaries of the power supply system, they have done an excellent job of printing and distributing the review. We of the Editorial Board would like to place on record our deep appreciation for the painstaking care the Catholic Press and the Xavier Publications of Ranchi have taken in printing and distributing 520 issues of the Journal (without counting the 32 missiological supplements) with commendable regularity and efficiency. We are sure that the VIDYAJYOTI readers will also join us in expressing our corporate gratitude to the different persons who have been at the helm of the Ranchi Press and Xavier Publications during

these years, and to all the workers who have been at the service of the Journal and its readers.

It is true that of late, and owing to certain factors beyond the control of editors and publishers, there have been some problems in the administration and its relation to the subscribers. The distance between the editors and the publishers added to the difficulties experienced by some of our subscribers. With a view to rendering a better and quicker service to our clients and streamlining the administrative machinery, the Vidyajyoti Institute has taken the initiative of transferring the publication of the Journal to Delhi. We thus hope to render our subscribers the satisfactory service they deserve. If, due to the disorder inevitably involved in a transfer of this kind, there arise any legitimate cause for complaint, we request our readers not to hesitate to inform us of their problems. We shall try to look into the matter expeditiously, while we hope they will bear with our limitations. We also count on their help by a prompt payment of the yearly subscription and by obtaining new subscribers and readers for the Journal.

It is now one year since we reconstituted the editorial board of the Journal. We are happy that in the meantime Fr Paddy Meagher, professor of Scripture at Vidyajyoti, has accepted the principal responsibility for the Book Review section. We wish him well.

\*

We begin the year with the Pope's pastoral visit to our country just a few weeks away. One may wonder if the hectic preparations for, and the euphoria over the visit of the Bishop of Rome, "our brother and friend", will end up in a passing celebration. The meaning of the visit must become true by a serious reflection of the Indian Church on her self-understanding and witness, in the face of the challenges of the future. Self-complacency is a temptation in a moment of euphoria. Apart from this, the Pope's visit can mark a turning-point in the renewal of the Church, of her life, mission and witness in the context of the Indian reality. That is why it would be important to express, already in our welcome to the Pope, that to which we commit ourselves.

Visits by Popes do not achieve magically in a short time what the community of believers is called to accomplish by a long struggle. The task and responsibility for renewal lies squarely on our shoulders. This visit will be fruitful only if it leaves behind a follow-up of commitment in our dioceses, parishes and small communities, if it

enables us to a self-examination on our being a Church in India and to a truer implementation of the Second Vatican Council and its spirit.

The recent extraordinary synod of bishops in November-December was a very strong experience of the catholicity of the Church, made more evident than even at the Council. Two-thirds of the bishops gathered now came from the Third World—a sign that these churches have come into their own and make today an important contribution to the universal communion of churches.

From the initial report by Cardinal Danneels onwards, the synod pointed out to the abundant fruits of the Council. Such are the discovery of the Bible by the people and the Christian communities, the liturgical renewal throughout the Church, the growth in the consciousness collegiality and corresponsibility, a new sense of the laity and their mission, an awareness in them of belonging to the Church or, rather, of *being* the Church, the Church's new relation to the world, the growth in its sensitivity to the social questions of the day, the preferential option for the poor, the beginning of a dialogue with the living faiths of today, and the call to a growing radical witness to human rights, to justice, freedom and peace—the fruit of a careful reading of the signs of the times.

These gains surely show a budgeoning renewal, but at the same time reveal that there have been not only “abuses” but also incompleteness and inadequacies in living the Council at all levels of the Church. In a sense the Council has yet to take place, and its spirit—a manifestation of the Breath of the Spirit—has yet to blow over the Christian communities at the grass-root level. Until the Church, mystery and communion of the believers, becomes an event, until the great insights of the Council are contextually translated into deeds at the level of the ordinary believers, of their struggles and hopes, the Council will not have happened. This means that we must still discern the new signs of the times and respond to the new questions they raise. If we fail to do this, the Council will have failed and will remain only in the form of statements and propositions. The sacramentality of the Church is its visibility, which means that the Church is created by the committed faith praxis of the believers.

The validity of the Council must therefore be judged by the fruits it helps the community of believers to bring forth and the promises it holds for the future of the Church in a changing world. The Council demands an open Church, which means a Church free to

become the Church of the poor and to respond to the demands implied in its transition from European to a world Church, in dialogue and solidarity with all believers and with all people of good will.

The VIDYAJYOTI Journal hopes to add its own mite to the reflection on the task and mission of all believers.

\*

The theme of personalism seems to be central in the thinking and teaching of John Paul II ever since his first encyclical letter *Redemptor Hominis*. The articles we offer this month touch on this theme from various angles.

Fr SUBHASH ANAND deals with it from the perspective of the very rich Indian tradition. He shows how this tradition has a sense of wholeness, a perception of oneness that can help modern man, so hopelessly fragmented into the various areas of his existence. This holistic view may help us to come closer to nature, which modern civilization tends to keep at a distance, or destroy. The involvement of the Indian Christian in this world will be coloured by the holistic approach of our culture.

Fr VINCENT PEREIRA shows how an attitude of personal relationship and interest can affect the preaching of priests and, by implication, all forms of communication. This is an area where the human sciences can be of great help to the pastoral work of the Church.

Fr THOMAS DABRE goes to the root of the Christian perception of the person. He explains the controversies among modern theologians in their effort to reflect on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. He thinks that the approach of Barth and Rahner, both of whom would avoid the ancient formulation of three persons in one God, results in an impoverishment of the Christian concept of God and of person. Hence, he favours rather what to him are the richer theologics of Lonergan and of Moltmann, both of whom still want to speak of three subjects or persons in the Trinity. DABRE also finds this approach more in harmony with the Indian tradition.

Finally, JYOTI SAHJ comes back from the angle of an artist to the question of what an Indian Church is and whether the sacrament of the shared meal could not be the first initiation into such a Church (cf the article of Sr S. Grant in the January 1985 issue).

In the context of the Pope's visit we are thus encouraged to a deeper reflection of our commitment to the inculturation of the Gospel and of the mission of the Church, for the service of our people.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.,  
Chief Editor

# Advaita or Agape

## An Ancient Holistic Vision for Modern Fragmented Man\*

Fr Subhash ANAND

The assassination of Indira Gandhi and the subsequent large-scale violence, the gas-leak tragedy of Bhopal—these are some of the signs that humanity has a long way to go in its search for world peace and global harmony. Are we today more humane, more happy than our ancestors? Is the modern city-dweller really more civilized than the primitive villager? Is the affluent West really more developed than the needy East? Frankly speaking, I am not sure we can give an unqualified affirmative answer to these questions. I believe that the contemporary pilgrimage of so many from the West to the East is an indication that the East has something specially significant to offer to the modern era in its search for humanity, in its quest for wholeness. In this paper I shall limit myself to some aspects of the possible contribution of India.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Original Dilemma*

In one of the Upanishads we have a very interesting myth that helps us to understand our situation:

In the beginning this world was soul (*atman*) alone in the form of a Person (*puruṣa*). Looking around, he saw nothing else than himself. . .

He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid. This one then thought to himself: "Since there is nothing else than myself, of what am I afraid?" Thereupon his fear departed, for of what should he have been afraid? Assuredly it is from a second that fear arises.

---

\* Paper presented at the *Journées Romaines*, September 1-7, 1985. I am grateful to the organizers for allowing me to publish it here. (Fr. Subhash ANAND teaches at the St. Joseph's Seminary, 4, Tashkent Rd. Allahabad, 211001).

1. It is not at all my claim that the whole of Hindu thinking is holistic. We do find points of view that appear not only incomplete but also oppressive. However, there are definitely some elements that, put together, provide a holistic vision of man.



Verily, he had no delight. Therefore one alone has no delight. He desired a second. He was, indeed, as large as a woman and a man closely embraced. He caused that self to fall apart. Therefrom arose a husband and a wife. Therefore this is true: "Oneself is like a half-fragment. . ."<sup>2</sup>

If man were all alone he would have no reason to be afraid, as there would be nothing or nobody threatening him. But he would have no company, and so no joy. This is his dilemma. Fortunately, there is a third possibility: communion. This is neither an absolutely monistic nor a completely dualistic approach to reality. The myth uses a fundamental human experience to explain this approach.

Man and woman are not just one, but neither are they really two. Theirs is a non-dual (*a-dvaita*) relation.<sup>3</sup> If they were totally distinct and fully different, their communion, if ever possible, would be absurd. Because of their *advaita* relation, their communion is not only possible, but also meaningful and, therefore, desirable. The myth even suggests an original oneness: man today is in search of his original wholeness, in search of his lost paradise. Right now he is only half his self.

This *advaita-darśana*, this holistic vision, in some way, is present in all the areas of Hindu thought, even though the expression may not always be used.<sup>4</sup> This fact makes it very difficult to write a paper on this subject: one does not know just where to start and how to proceed. The author of the *Brahma-sūtra*, which is considered to be an aphoristic summary of the main teachings of the Upanishads, demands that our approach to reality be guided by this principle of harmony (*samanvaya*).<sup>5</sup> Since reality is a whole, constituted by mutually related parts, it can be understood only by an effort that lays bare the interrelatedness of the many components of our day-to-day experience.<sup>6</sup> Thus *advaita*, being a characteristic of reality, is also a hermeneutical norm. Taking man, the seer, as our point of departure, we can speak of four basic areas where harmony is pos-

2. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanīṣad*, 1.4.1-3. Tr. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, London, Oxford University Press, rep, 1971, p. 81.

3. Here I am using "*a-dvaita*" in its literal rather than scholastic meaning.

4. It is significant that in India philosophy is called *darśana*, literally "seeing".

5. *Brahma-sūtra*, 1.1.4 This text is one of the most important sources of Hindu philosophy. It has been commented upon by Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, not to mention lesser luminaries. See also G. GISPERT-SAUCH, "Shankara-charya and Our Theological Task," *Vidyajyoti* 42 (1978), pp. 348-55.

6. The French Indologist, Louis RENOU thinks that "*upanīṣad*" means equi-valence". See his *Hinduism*, tr. J. K. Balbir, London, Prentice Hall International, 1961, p. 24.

sible and, therefore, desirable: man and nature, man and God, man and society, man and his own self.<sup>7</sup> Our myth has taken human sexuality as a symbol of man's search. This is not without its significance, because sexuality, properly understood, contains all the four basic areas we have mentioned above: sex reveals man as nature and as person, capable of self-possession and therefore of self-surrender to the other, both finite and the infinite.<sup>8</sup>

### *Puruṣa and Prakṛti: Man and Nature*

In the book of Genesis we have two accounts of creation. In the second account, he is formed out of the dust from the ground.<sup>9</sup> The "Hymn to the Puruṣa"—an early poetic expression of the Hindu awareness of the interrelatedness of reality—begins in the opposite direction: creation emerges from the cosmic man, the primeval Person, the original Puruṣa, who is immolated as a sacrificial victim, and from the different parts of this Puruṣa emerge the various parts of our visible universe.<sup>10</sup> The early Hindus, who were so close to nature, felt a mysterious kinship with her. In their poetic imagination they expressed the profound similarity they experienced between man and nature. They concluded that this is so because nature comes from Man. The "Hymn to the Puruṣa" is an etiological protology: the cosmos is so human, so similar to man, because it comes from anthropos. The Bible tells us that man is called Adam because he is the child of 'dāmā (soil). So we suggest that if in the Hindu tradition the visible creation comes from Puruṣa, it must be called Puruṣeya, it must have a personal character, it must have its own humanity. Though this is not said in so many words, it is this attitude that characterizes the Hindu approach to nature.

One of the earliest witnesses to the personalistic relation of the Hindu genius to nature is to be found in the ancient "Hymn to the Earth". The poet considers the Earth as his mother, whose favours he always hopes to receive. Like any good woman, she too is marked by truth and beauty. Like a good mother, she is bounteous, accept-

7. See my "Holistic Approach to Spiritual Formation in Major Seminaries," *Indian Missiological Review*, 4 (1982), pp. 137-56.

8. See my "Human Sexuality: Some Theological Reflections" *Vidyajyoti*, 47 (1983), pp. 77-85.

9. See Gen 1.1-2.9.

10. See *Rg-veda*, 10.90. *Puruṣa* can mean male, man, person; *prakṛti* can mean nature (metaphysically and poetically), woman, form. In the Sāṃkhya philosophy, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are the two ultimate principles: conscious spirit and the material source of creation respectively.

ing all her children, be they good or bad, wise or foolish, nourishing them at her generous breasts.<sup>11</sup> The inspiration underlying this poetic outburst is the daily experience of man: nature provides him all he needs. Thus for him nature is not just *materia*, but *mater*.

Even when man transmutes nature to fabricate tools for his trade, this personal relation remains. In one of his novels, Bhabani Bhattacharya describes a tragic scene from Bengal, just before the great famine of 1943, when the Japanese troops were not very far from the Indian border. As a security measure, the Bengal government sends its agents to destroy the boats of the village fishermen. The boats are axed to pieces, and the wood is put for sale at a very cheap rate. Nobody in the village wants to buy that wood. Consequently, the government agents are forced to make a bonfire out of it.

As the blaze died down and the boat-wreckers moved out in their motor launch, the fisherfolk stepped to the burnt wreckage and each picked up a handful of hot cinders and tied it to the corner of his dhoti. Then down the midnight path they walked back in utter silence, their heads bent, their bodies and souls burnt and destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

This is exactly what Hindus will do after cremating a very much loved and respected person. They will respectfully gather the ashes and walk away from the cremation ground "in utter silence, their heads bent, their bodies and souls burnt and destroyed." For these fishermen the boats were not just boats, but intimately part of their person. Earlier they had protested to the boat-wreckers: "Boats are more than limbs for us, folks: they are our blood and bone and heart and soul and all."<sup>13</sup>

If we grant that nature is more than matter, that there is something deeply personal and human about it, then it becomes man's partner in dialogue. Man just cannot live his life in its fulness while treating nature as a mute stage. Man must listen to nature and find out the moment when nature is so disposed that the two can act in harmony—for only then will man succeed. This auspicious moment is called *muhūrta*, and the Hindu genius has elaborated a way to determine this: *jyotiś-śāstra*.<sup>14</sup> I must admit that the original insight

11. See *Atharva-veda*, 12.1.

12. B. BHATTACHARYA *So Many Hungers*, Delhi, Orient Paperbacks, 1978, p. 58.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

14. In Sanskrit this word is used for astronomy and astrology as well, for originally the two are intimately connected, if not one.

seems to be lost and we are left with something that, to a Western mind at least, appears as a superstition.

Man has his moods and so does nature. There is the cloudy weather when we feel dull, and the sunny day which brightens our spirit. This close relation between the emotions of man and the moods of nature is well portrayed by Kalidasa, the greatest poet of classical Sanskrit, in his *Meghadūta* (The Cloud-Messenger), and *Rtusamhāra* (The Collection of Seasons). Music is the most potent medium man has at his disposal to express his deepest feelings. This is the reason why he sings when he is joyful as well as when he is sad. According to the Hindu musical tradition, the different musical modes (*rāgas*) gives expression to different human feelings (*rasa*). They just cannot be sung any time of the day. Every mode has its time: a definite part of the day or of the night. Some are even assigned to a particular season of the year. Only when the mood of man is in agreement with the mood of nature, do we have real music, real harmony, a cosmic dialogue.<sup>15</sup>

If man and nature are not just co-existent, then man needs nature to realize his full humanity. If I am to truly be myself, if I am to fully realize myself, if I am to effectively communicate myself, I must take my body seriously, explore all its possibilities, make it transparent to my spirit. Nature is not just the locality in which I exist, but it is in some way my localization, my body. I need my body.<sup>16</sup> I need nature. In our own times this idea has been most eloquently voiced by the greatest contemporary Hindu poet, Rabindranath Tagore. He sees God as the supreme Artist and creation as His artistic self-expression. Hence the closer man comes to nature, the more will he discover his own artistic potential. Without this discovery man cannot be really creative. Creativity is the specifically human possibility making man different from the beast. Therefore, only that which makes man creative is real education. Hence closeness to nature is an essential element of sound education, and therefore Tagore writes:

Besides practising brahmacharya a boy should live in the midst of nature. Towns are not our natural abodes, and have been built to supply our material needs. That we should be born in towns and be brought up in the lap of

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15. The Sanskrit word *samvāda* meant both harmony and dialogue.

16. At times there appears to be a certain inconsistency between Hindu theoretical reflection and practical guidance. Thus, though the body is seen as a prison, yet the Yoga technique advocates the comfortable—and therefore the steady—posture (*āsana*) and the calmed—and therefore the regular—breathing (*prāṇāyāma*). The Yogi just cannot ignore the body.

stone and brick was never intended by Providence. Towns snatch us away from the bosom of nature and consume us in their hungry furnace. . .

But nature's help is indispensable when we are still growing up, and still learning, and before we are drawn neck and crop into the whirlpool of affairs. Trees and rivers, and blue skies and beautiful views, are just as necessary as benches and blackboards, books and examinations.

From ancient times the Indian mind has developed through close and unbroken contact with nature, and the desire to be one with animal and vegetable life has been inherent in the Indian spirit.

The four elements of earth, water, air and fire, form a whole and are instinct with the universal soul—this knowledge cannot be gained at a school in town. A school in town is a factory which can only teach us to regard the world as a machine.<sup>17</sup>

The reader will excuse this rather lengthy quotation, but it explains well the heart of India, a heart that instinctively sees the Poverello of Assisi as one of her own. This line of thinking led Tagore to found his own school at Shantiniketan, in the abode of peace. Man can have peace only when he is whole.

If man needs nature, then nature needs man too. The spirit in me needs my body, for without it there would not be a real human existence. So too, my body needs my spirit, for without it, it would be just dead matter and not my body. This concern for nature finds a cultic and an ascetical form. The earliest Hindu scriptures are very much concerned with sacrifice (*yajña*). By their sacrificial activity they believed they were helping in the maintenance of nature. There is in the "Hymn to the Puruṣa" the primitive belief that between two things that look alike there is some kind of vital link, so that by affecting one we can affect the other. Even today we notice that a child who is angry with his younger sibling because he or she has usurped his place, gives expression to his resentment by beating a doll that looks like the usurper. I am told that some forms of psychotherapy work on this principle. The Hindu liturgists believe that between the sacrificial ritual and the cosmic process there is a mystical affinity (*bandhutā*). Hence, by performing the sacrifice correctly we are maintaining the cosmic process. The "Hymn to the Puruṣa" does not merely tell us that this cosmos comes from *anthropos*, but that it comes from the sacrificial immolation of *Puruṣa*, and therefore it can be maintained only by sacrifice. The

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17. R. TAGORE, *Towards Universal Man*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1961, pp. 72-73.

*Bhagavad-gītā* states it very graphically: "Living beings depend upon food; food comes from rain; rain is the result of sacrifice; sacrifice is man's action."<sup>18</sup> Consequently, a man who does not perform sacrifice and still continues to enjoy the benefits of nature is a thief.<sup>19</sup>

By his ascetical self-discipline (*tapas*) man brings all his senses and his faculties within his control, so that he can focus them on a desired goal. Just as the sacrificial activity has a cosmic affinity, so too the ascetical self-discipline of man has a cosmic affinity, because cosmos comes from anthropos. Just as we have the creation myth of the sacrificial immolation of the Primeval Puruṣa, so too we have the myth of the pre-creation penance of Brahma, the Demiurge.<sup>20</sup> When Vishnu is pleased with Brahma's penance, he appears to him and tells him: "It is through penance that I create this universe, keep it going, and lead it to its consummation."<sup>21</sup> Let us now pass on to two contemporary texts.

Ishvar Petlikar, a Gujarati novelist, in one of his novels presents the story of a village family that, *inter alia*, is experiencing the adverse consequences of modernization. The elder son, due to his schooling, is slowly drifting away from the land, taking very little interest in the family farm. Here is his father's advice to him:

I grant you have an interest in agriculture, but I am afraid you have not really understood the heart of the earth. Even if there is no need, still you should, at least once in a way, have a walk through your fields. This gives a soothing touch to the earth, and she feels comforted at the thought that her lord has come to meet her. . .

No! You will not understand this. The earth is the faithful spouse. I know from my own experience: this faithful one will not open her heart to an alien and bestow her favours on him.

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18. *Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.14

19. *Ibid.*, 3.12. I am also aware that this principle of *bandhuta* explains the faith people have in magic, specially in what is known as black magic. Salman RUSHDIE, in his novel *Midnight's Children*, New York, Avon Books, 1982, p. 359, makes a point when through his hero he expresses these thoughts: "As a people, we are obsessed with correspondences. Similarities between this and that, between apparently unconnected things, make us clap our hands delightedly when we find them out. It is a sort of national longing for form—or perhaps simply an expression of our deep belief that forms lie hidden within reality; that meaning reveals itself only in flashes. Hence our vulnerability."

20. See *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, 2.9. In popular Hinduism, the creation of the universe is ascribed to Brahma, its preservation to Vishnu, and its final consummation to Shiva. But in the Vaishnava tradition, to which the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* belongs, Vishnu is the supreme God, and Brahma and Shiva are his agents.

21. *Ibid.*, 2.9.23. Translation mine.

Today our fields are dry and barren. Even though others may have a different explanation, I can clearly hear the weeping of the afflicted earth. Today her lord lives far away in the city, whiling away, his time in a comfortable house. He is treating the earth like a prostitute, every year giving her to a different customer for the sake of money. How can the faithful spouse endure this? . . .

If today the earth feels abandoned by her lord, will not her breasts dry up. . . You are definitely a learned man, but the earth needs more the heart than the head of her lord.<sup>22</sup>

The novel is centred upon the younger son who is harsh towards his wife because she is ugly-looking. She remains faithful to him and after years of married life gives birth to his son. Significantly, the title of the novel is "Incarnation of the Earth". In the faithful wife the earth becomes incarnate. As the wife becomes fruitful through the love of her husband, so too the earth. This way of thinking may sound strange to a man who has pinned his faith in physical sciences. However, today a new branch of learning is falteringly making progress: para-psychology. We are slowly realizing that our forefathers were not that mistaken after all when they thought that our universe is not a closed system, governed by physical, chemical and biological laws. Today medical science too is more and more accepting the relation between the psychic and the somatic in man, between a man's emotional and physical state.

The belief that the relation of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, between man and nature, is similar to that of husband and wife is the central idea of the Malayalam novel *Chemmeen* of Sivasankara Pillai Thakazhi. This novel describes life in a coastal village in Kerala. The fishermen believe that however turbulent the sea may become, it will not harm the fishermen as long as their wives are faithful to them. Karuthamma, a young Hindu woman, is forced to marry Palani, even though she was deeply in love with a Muslim lad, Parekutti. Time does not heal the wound in the heart of both the lovers. One night, when Parekutti can no longer bear his loneliness, he comes to Karuthamma for solace. It is a very stormy night, and Palani is out with his boat. Karuthamma meets Parekutti on the sea-shore and surrenders herself totally to his embrace. Palani is swallowed by the sea, which does not spare Karuthamma and Parekutti either. Then calm follows, and in the sky one can see Arundhati, the morning star,

22. As I do not know Gujarati, I have based my translation on the Hindi version, *Dharti Kā Avatār*, Allahabad, Sarasvati Press, 1958, pp. 26-27.

uide of the fishermen, and also symbol of conjugal fidelity.<sup>23</sup>

This intimate relation between man and the rest of creation is embodied in the idea of the four ages (*catur-yuga*), found in the Hindu theology of history. When man is perfectly good, when *dharma* flourishes in its totality, then we have the *sarya-yuga*, the paradisaical situation of humanity, when man experiences no suffering and no want of any kind. Slowly, quarter by quarter, *dharma* diminishes, and we have the *tretā*-, the *dvāpāra*- and the *kali-yuga*. We are now in this last age, when only one fourth of *dharma* exists. The earth too is in a bad shape. Nature is erratic and miserly towards man. When moral decadence will have reached its rock-bottom, there will be a cosmic conflagration. Then this rotten state will come to an end, and once again a new humanity will people the earth. If I have understood right, then it is this belief that is one of the aspects of the annual celebration of the Hindu festival, Holi. As the feast-day comes closer and closer, people begin to abuse each other, and I have even witnessed a competition between two hostels on a university campus, as to who could hurl the more sexy abuse. On the night preceding the feast there is a bonfire. On the feast-day itself people greet each other with colours, and in the noon go from house to house greeting each other with a warm embrace. This is called *holi-milan*, the Holi-reconciliation. This festival marks the approach of spring, the season of hope.

### *Ātman and Brahman: Immanence and Transcendence*

If two brothers look alike, it is because they have a common father. If two human beings look alike, feel alike, think alike, it is because both have basically the same spirit, the human soul. If *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, if anthropos and cosmos look alike, then it is because both have the one Great Reality (Brahman) as their cause.<sup>24</sup> If man and nature feel alike, then it is because both are animated by the one Great Breath (*Ātman*).<sup>25</sup> This is the ontological foundation

23. For the English translation, see *Chemmeen*, tr. N. Menon, Bombay, Jaico Pbs., rep. 1978. According to Hindu mythology, Arundhati is the wife of the great sage Vasishtha. She is regarded as the highest model of conjugal fidelity. According to some marriage rites, the bride is shown the Arundhati star as part of the conclusion of the rite.

24. The word *brahman* seems to be derived from the root *brh* (to grow to increase). Classical Samkhya is atheistic, but in the *Bhagavad-gīta*, Krishna claims to be the Lord both of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. See 7.4-5, 9.8-10, and 15.16-17.

25. It has been suggested that the Sanskrit *ātman* and the German *atmen* (to breathe) are related.



of the holistic vision of India. Hence it is a mark of wisdom to see God—the Supreme Person—in everything and everything in God.<sup>26</sup> God is not simply an efficient cause like the potter making a pot. He is in some way part of my being, my deepest reality. His presence within me is of more importance to me than that of my own breath. God is both Brahman and Ātman. Thus Hindu theology is also holistic, because God is the Whole (*pūrṇa*). So wonderful is this wholeness that even though all this comes from Him, He remains unimpaired.<sup>27</sup> Therefore he who knows the divine wholeness himself becomes whole.<sup>28</sup>

God is the Whole by being the reconciliation of opposites. We are told that the Western mind tends to think in "either or" terms: A is this OR not this! The Hindu mind approaches reality in a holistic way: A is this AND not this! This type of theology is better expressed through symbols and myths than through dry and clear-cut concepts and categories. God is not neuter, He is male and female. He is Ardhanārīśvara.<sup>29</sup> He is the ideal Yogi, calm and concentrated. He is also the best dancer, in fact the King of dancers (*Naṭarāj*). He is the one teacher of all, the one source of all wisdom. He is also mad and those who follow Him become mad like Him. He is the perfect celibate and by the heat of his penance He is able to reduce Cupid to ashes. He is also the ever youthful Lover who can satisfy the desires of sixteen thousand women! He is the supreme Truth, devoid of all deceit, He is also the cunning Dwarf and the deceptive Maiden.<sup>30</sup> I could go on. . .

Trying to explain the relation of God and His creation, Ramanuja, the great South Indian theologian of the eleventh/twelfth century uses the analogy of soul and body. God is the Soul and the whole of creation is His body. This analogy lends itself to different interpretations. I become present to you through my body. So too, if the universe is seen as the body of God, then it must mediate the

26. *Bhagavad-gītā*, 6.30. This text speaks of God as *parama-puruṣa* (8.8).

27. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanīṣad*, 5.1.1.

28. *Chāndogya-upanīṣad*, 3.12.7.

29. In Shaiva mythology and iconography, Shiva is sometimes portrayed as half male and half female, and then he is known as Ardhanārīśvara.

30. Once when the gods were outwitted by the demons, they got Vishnu to go to them and plead for their share of land. Vishnu disguised himself as a dwarf (*vāmana*), and was given three steps of land. Then he revealed his true form and grabbed all the land from the demons. On another occasion, the gods and the demons were fighting to get the drink of life. Vishnu appeared as a young seductive maiden (*mohini*) and distracted the demons, and secured the drink of life for the gods.

divine to man. Hence, if man is to know God he must return to nature. In the *Chândogya-upaniṣad* we have the charming story of Satyakama, an illegitimate son of a maid-servant. He is accepted as a novice by a venerable Brahmin teacher because he confessed that neither he nor his mother knew who his father was. And now let the text speak for itself:

After having received him as a pupil, he separated out four hundred lean, weak cows and said: "Follow these my dear." As he was driving them on, he said: "I must not return without a thousand." So he lived away a number of years. When they came to be a thousand, the bull spoke to him, saying: "Satyakama!" "Sir," he replied. "We have reached a thousand, my dear. Bring us the teacher's house. And let me tell you a quarter of Brahman."<sup>31</sup>

He is thus instructed in turn by fire, a swan, and a diver-bird. Much before he could be instructed by his spiritual preceptor, Satyakama has already been spiritually enlightened. He has come to know God through his experience of nature.

The Hindu response to God who reveals Himself through nature is also holistic. Prayer becomes a cosmic celebration. I shall illustrate this by examining the *Gāyatrī-mantra*, one of the most frequently used prayer-formulas of the Hindu tradition.<sup>32</sup> Usually the recitation of this *mantra* begins with the chanting of "om", to which are added "*bhūr bhuvah svah*". The in-itself-meaningless word *om* has been seen as the gist of all revelation and, hence, the symbol of God who is beyond all our words.<sup>33</sup> All our words, when applied to God, are meaningless. The three words *bhūr*, *bhuvah*, *svah* (earth, atmosphere, heaven) indicate a three-tiered cosmology: the visible universe is made up of three parts. Hence the utterance of these words is meant to evoke a sense of totality (*sarva*) as is explicitly indicated by the *Bṛhadāranyaka-upaniṣad*.<sup>34</sup> This idea of a three-tiered totality is also suggested by *om* which is analysed as a+u+m.<sup>35</sup> It is also said to be mysteriously derived from *bhūr*, *bhuvah*, *svah*, and therefore is symbolic of totality (*sarva*).<sup>36</sup> In prayer man places himself in openness before God. But man is both spirit and matter, and nature is in some way part of his body, extension of his person. Therefore, in order to place himself fully before God, man must become aware of

31. *Chândogya-upaniṣad*, 4.4-5. Tr. Hume: *Op. cit.*, pp. 218-19.

32. *Rg-veda*, 3.62.10.

33. *Kātha-upaniṣad*, 2.15.

34. *Bṛhadāranyaka-upaniṣad*, 6.4.25.

35. *Praśna-upaniṣad*, 5.5; *Maitrī-upaniṣad*, 6.3.

36. *Chândogya-upaniṣad*, 2.23.3.

what he is in his totality: part of this vast universe, its conscious centre, its mouthpiece.

The *Gāyatrī-mantra* can be translated thus: "We contemplate the divine splendour of the God (Who is symbolized by the) Sun. May He awaken our minds." Though it may be recited any time of the day, it seems to me originally it was a prayer recited at sunrise. Night, when man and nature sleep, has come to an end. It is dawn. Birds are chanting their morning prayer, and they are inviting man to join them in their song of thanksgiving to the Lord of all creation for the gift of this new day. The poet prays that he may have a deeper awakening, a spiritual enlightenment. Dawn is the mid-point between night and day, darkness and light. Spatially, dawn is associated with the horizon, where sky and earth appear to meet. Thus dawn is a symbol of a meeting of God and man, life and death, light and darkness, grace and sin. Consequently, it is a call to prayer, for prayer is a meeting of God and man, man in his totality. When this meeting takes place there is an inner sunrise, a spiritual awakening. The recitation of the *Gāyatrī-mantra* concludes with "om *sāntiḥ sāntiḥ sāntiḥ*" When man places himself before Him who is Whole, then he himself experiences wholeness and therefore peace. But because he is part of this cosmos, then the peace in his heart—if it is deep and lasting—overflows into the cosmos, and so we have peace on earth, peace in the atmosphere, and peace in heaven. Thus true prayer is a holistic experience.<sup>37</sup>

In Sanskrit, besides *uṣas*, *sandhyā* is another word for dawn. This word is very evocative. It is formed by adding the prefix *sam* (together, with) to the verbal root *dhā* (place). Hence *sandhyā* means union, joint. It is a meeting point, and therefore a sacred hour, an hour of prayer. This is the traditional *sandhyā-vandanā*, the prayer that is a meeting. The coming together of rivers (*sangama*) is another meeting point. A *sangama* is always considered sacred, a place of prayer, of God-experience. Even today thousands and thousands of devout Hindus flock to Allahabad, where the Ganga and Yamuna meet. The pious Hindu maintains that there is a third, underground river, Sarasvati. Thus the *sangama* of Allahabad is doubly holy, as it is the *sangama* of three rivers.

If nature invites man to meet his creator and thereby to become whole, then it also reminds him of the very real opposite possibility:

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37. See my "A Pre-Christian Easter Prayer," *Vidyajyoti*, 47 (1983), pp. 135-41.

sin. The rising sun is a symbol of spiritual awakening. It brings joy. On the other hand, the solar eclipse indicates the blinding darkness of sin. Even today when a solar eclipse occurs, many in India experience great fear and life seems to come to a stand-still. It is seen as a call to reparation (*prāyaścitta*).

The sun is one of the most basic symbols of the Hindu religious consciousness. It symbolizes both the warmth that makes life possible, and the light that makes life meaningful. But we noted earlier that God is the reconciliation of opposites. Hence the night and its darkness is also a symbol of the divine. So we find in the ancient Hindu books hymns addressed to Rātrī, the Night. A modern Bengali novelist gives us a hymn in prose that bursts forth from the heart of the hero, as he sits in a cremation ground, and observes the grandeur of the night:

For the first time in my life I realized that night has a form and features of its own, apart from the forms and features of trees and hills, earth and water, field and jungle. I saw night, deep, dark, colossal, seated on the wide-spread world, under the limitless sky of midnight, with eyes closed as in mystic meditation, while the whole universe, with closed lips and bated breath, preserved the inviolate calm. Suddenly my eyes saw a flash of palpitating beauty. What liar, I thought, declared that light alone had beauty, and darkness none? When had I ever seen such an inundation of beauty as the darkness that flooded the earth and the heavens, that flowed about, above, below, and within me in an all-embracing infinitude, as far as my eye could reach, and beyond?

The deeper, the more incomprehensible, and the more unlimited a thing was, the darker, it was. The limitless ocean was dark; and was dark the interior of forests, impenetrable and full of ancient mysteries. He who was the support of the universe, the source of light and movement, the life of all life, and the Soul of beauty, was He not the quintessence of darkness to eyes of men? Was that because He was devoid of beauty? The more incomprehensible and unknown a thing was, the more impenetrable it was, the darker it was. That was, perhaps, why death and the other world was shrouded in such unfathomable darkness! That was why, perhaps, the Beauty that dazzled the eyes of Radha and flooded the world with the radiance of His love, He, too, was compound of concentrated darkness.<sup>38</sup>

The Beauty of whom the hero is thinking about is Krishna, literally the Dark One. Yes, in art Krishna is usually painted pitch-black, while Radha is fair—the wholeness of opposites. Yet He is the *avatāra* of Vishnu, originally a solar deity.

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38. S. CHATTERJEE, *Shrikant*, Bombay, Jaico Pbs., 1969, pp. 129-30.

This awareness of nature as a school of prayer may explain the ancient structure of life consisting of four stages (*āśramas*). Man really begins his life when he is reborn through the sacrament of initiation, through which he enters the first stage of life: he becomes a *brahmācārīn*, a student of sacred learning. After finishing his studies, he gets married and rears a family: he is a householder, a *gṛhastha*. The third part of his life he is expected to spend in the forest: *vanavāsa*. The forest is the symbol of nature in its pristine purity, unspoiled by man, and therefore possessing fully its original power to express the divine. Without the experience of the divine, man cannot be fully detached, detached even from his house, in order to become a wanderer, the fourth stage of life: *śannyāsa*.

*Karma and Natṣkarmya: Involvement and Freedom*

The Hindu ethical thinkers have proposed four goals to be achieved in order to give meaning (*artha*) to the life of man. The four *puruṣārthas* are *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, and *mokṣa*. Every man needs a basic economic security. He needs food, clothing and shelter. If these basic needs are not fulfilled, then it becomes very difficult to realize the other possibilities latent in man. Thus *artha*—economic well-being—is the first goal of human striving. But this is not simply a private concern. It is significant that "*artha-śāstra*", translated as "economics", originally meant "politics".<sup>39</sup> To ensure food, clothing and housing we need suitable safeguards, and for this an adequate social set-up is indispensable. Hence *artha* also includes secular involvement and not just personal livelihood.

Besides biological needs, which man has in common with animals, man has an aesthetic dimension. He can enjoy things and experiences which are not really concerned with his individual bodily survival. In fact, this is one way of differentiating the human way of life from merely animal existence. Aesthetic fulfilment is the second *puruṣārtha*.<sup>40</sup>

In his quest for economic well-being and aesthetic fulfilment, man must keep a certain sense of proportion. He must, on the one hand, not jeopardize his total well-being, and, on the other, respect the rights of others. Thus *artha* and *kāma* are to be regulated by *dharma*, the

39. The ancient treatise of KAUTILYA, *Arthaśāstra*, is really a work of politics.

40. Both in Sanskrit and in some of the regional languages of India "*kāma*" means erotic passion, but not merely that.

third *puruṣārtha*. However *dharma*—moral perfection—is not just a negative law, prohibiting the individual from harming the interests of other human beings. Even a superficial reflection reveals to us our indebtedness to others.<sup>41</sup> Hence we have a positive duty to help others. This may be one way of understanding the fourfold division of Hindu society, which in recent times has evoked bitter criticism from outsiders and even from Hindus themselves. The society has three basic needs: spiritual (religious and scholarly), material, and defence. Hence people with appropriate talents are assigned these areas. The others who are not particularly gifted are at the service of people engaged in the above-mentioned fields. Thus the division of the society into four *varṇas* was meant to provide a holistic economic planning: every member giving his best and yet all the needs of the society being taken care of.

*Artha*, *kāma*, and *dharma* are in a way concerned with man's life on this earth. But man has a longing for immortality. He wants to get beyond this life which is fragmented by his space-time conditioning. This freedom, *mokṣa*, is the final goal of man's life. In a certain sense, it is this that gives direction to men's life on earth. Hence three of the four stages of his life's journey—*brahmacarya*, *vanavāsa*, and *sannyāsa*—are concerned with his spiritual growth. The Hindu concept of *dharma* is intimately connected with the fourfold division of society and the four stages of the individual's life. It is a *varṇa-āśrama-dharma*. It concerns itself with the individual and the society, with the temporal and the transcendental, with the bodily and the spiritual.

Slowly, however, man realized that his involvement in the temporal affairs can make him oblivious of his spiritual destiny. He also discovered that he need not wait for death to attain his transcendental goal. He could be free while still living on this earth (*jīvan-mukta*). For these two reasons he is tempted to run away from the secular and become a recluse. An important Hindu text, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, insists on a synthesis of secular involvement and a life of contemplation. It shows how one can be a contemplative engaged in action in the heart of the world. This is possible only if we have a holistic vision, seeing God in all things and all things in God, not

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41. According to the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, every man is born with four debts (*catur-ṛṇa*). He is indebted to his parents for his birth, to the sages from whom he receives wisdom, to other human beings for their kindness and friendship, and to the gods who keep nature in good shape. Cfr 1.7.2.

merely ontologically, but also teleologically.<sup>42</sup> This will enable a man to be deeply involved in the secular and yet be free.

### *Rta and Satya: Order and Presence*

The earliest Hindu poet saints were struck by the orderliness of nature. They also realized that this order (*rta*) was a source of well-being for man. We have noted above that the early thinkers were very much concerned with sacrifice, precisely because it was considered as the best means to safeguard the cosmic order. Slowly, the centre of reflection and concern was no longer the cosmos with its order, but man. The sages realized that man's authentic presence (*satya*) is more important than the wonderful order in the universe. They realized that man can affect the universe for the better or for the worse not merely by his action, but also, and much more, by his presence, his deep inner disposition.<sup>43</sup>

Hindu spirituality has been accused of being introspective, and there is some truth in this. But there is another way of looking at it. A passage from a recent Bengali novel will illustrate this. A traditional doctor (*valdya*) is teaching his son the art of feeling the pulse and diagnosing the disease of the patient. He tells him:

But mere learning does not give you the power to determine the disease, its duration, even the time of death, if it is a fatal disease. Let me tell you this—it calls for a very acute and sensitive power of perception. It is customary to close the eyes when feeling the pulse. Do you know why? Because it calls for intense concentration—to be able to fathom the nature of the beat and realize what it seems to indicate. Nothing, absolutely nothing, must distract you. When the doctor feels the pulse he is like a saint to whom the deepest secret of life-force reveals itself.<sup>44</sup>

Hence when the young man is to be actually initiated into this wonderful art, his father so arranges things that "no one else was allowed to enter the room. The knowledge had to be imparted in the strictest solitude. He wanted his son to respond from the depths

42. See my "Contemplation and Secular Involvement", *Vidyajyoti*, 47 (1983), pp. 240-49. We shall later refer to Gandhi, who appears to be a good example of contemplation combined with secular involvement. He was deeply inspired by the *Bhagavad-gita*.

43. See my "Satyam eva jayate" in J. NEUNER et. alii, *Mission in India*, Poona, Ishvani Kendra, 1977, pp. 5-13.

44. T. BANERJEE, *Arogyaniketan*, tr. E. Chatterjee, New Delhi, Arnold-Heinmann, 1977, p. 61.

of his consciousness."<sup>45</sup> If reality is holistic, then authentic intimacy with one part will put us in communion with the whole. Nothing is so close to man as his own total self—body and soul. He is vitally associated with nature, with other human beings and with God. Hence the deeper he goes into himself the more will he discover nature, other human beings and God, and vice versa.

To discover himself man must be himself, and the more he discovers himself the more he becomes himself. Thus there is a reciprocal relation between self-awareness and authentic presence, because self-awareness is part of man's being, as it is of any person. The Yoga tradition indicates as its goal this conscious self-possession, a conscious standing in one's true self (*svārāpa-avasthāna*).<sup>46</sup> Both as a discipline and as a state to be realized, *yoga* is holistic. In fact, "*yoga*" is derived from the verbal root "*yuj*", which means to unite. *Yoga* stands for the re-collected state. I have stated earlier that in the world our life is experienced as fragmented. We feel that all of us are in some way split personalities. We experience *yoga* when we gather ourselves into a conscious whole that shows us what we are: beings in communion.<sup>47</sup> Hence the best *yogin* is one who sees all as himself (*ātma-aupamyā*), not making any distinctions.<sup>48</sup> Without this capacity to see all as equal (*sama-darśana*) there can be no *satya*.<sup>49</sup> Thus the real *yogin* becomes the heart of all beings (*sarva-bhūtaḥṛdaya*), sensitive to the moods of all reality.<sup>50</sup> Just as by his spiritual discipline his body becomes more and more transparent to his spirit, so too, the rest of creation. This is one way of understanding the traditional Hindu belief that a real *yogin* has superhuman powers (*siddhis*). As a spiritual discipline *yoga* with its eight limbs (*aṣṭa-aṅga*), takes into consideration the bodily, the emotional, the moral and the spiritual aspects of man. Harmony in all these areas is essential because there is an intimate relation among them. By harmonizing one, say our breathing, we can harmonize our thoughts.

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45. *Ibid.*, p. 77

46. *Yoga-sūtra*, 1.3.

47. Classical Yoga proposes *kaivalya* (isolation) as its goal. Cfr. *Yoga-sūtra*, 2.25., 3.50, 55. But in the *Bhagavad-gītā* we have another approach to Yoga: it is defined as the skill required to act rightly in the world (2.50). This right action brings about *loka-saṁgraha*, that is, cosmic integration (3.20).

48. *Bhagavad-gītā*, 6.32.

49. *Bhagavata-purāṇa*, 11.19.37.

50. *Ibid.*, 1.2.2.



*The Fragmented Industrial Man*

I have tried to show that in Hinduism there are elements that suggest a holistic approach to reality. This approach is inspired by the primordial experience of the kinship man has with nature. We shall now see what happens when this kinship is not taken seriously. This is precisely the predicament of modern man who is the child of an industrial culture.

Industrialization presupposes a mechanized approach to nature. Nature is no longer treated as personal, but is reduced to an instrument of production. It loses its transcendental significance, and becomes subservient to mere utility. I am no longer interested in a flower because it is beautiful, but because I can sell it for some money. . . The industrial mind is not concerned with individuals, because machines cannot deal with individuals, but only with standardized items. Individuals are concrete, but standardized items are closer to universal concepts which exist in the mind. Thus the individual is stripped of his individuality and becomes an anonymous unit in the mass. Further, the more industry advances, the more specialized it becomes. This leads to further fragmentation. Man, losing sight of the wholeness of nature, loses sight of his own wholeness. We have one example of this in the medical field, where specialization has reached its peak. Our doctors more and more treat some part of man, and not the whole man.

Another consequence of industrialization is urbanization. Men are uprooted from their village homes and made to dwell in crowded cities. Kamala Markandaya, in one of her novels, describes with great feeling the tragedy of the city-dweller:

Not in the town, where all that was natural had long been sacrificed, but on its outskirts, one could still see the passing of the seasons. For in the town there were the crowds, and streets battered down upon the earth, and the filth that men had put upon it; and one walked with care for what might lie beneath one's feet or threaten before or behind; and in this preoccupation forgot to look at the sun or the stars, or even observe they had changed their setting in the sky; and knew nothing of the passage of time save in dry frenzy, by looking at a clock. But for us, who lived by the green, quiet fields, perilously close though these were to the town, nature still gave its muted message. Each passing day, each week, each month, left its sigh, clear and unmistakable.<sup>51</sup>

51. K. MARKANDAYA, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Bombay, Jaico Pbs., rep. 1957] p. 115.

I myself have walked through the crowded streets of Bombay, with my eyes glued to the ground, lest I stamp upon some dirt, and in the process forgot to notice not only the sun and the stars, but also my fellow-beings, my co-travellers on the road of life. I think of the thousands of children who live in the multi-storeyed buildings of our modern cities who will rarely—if ever—witness the golden splendour of the rising sun, or the nostalgic experience of a sunset.

When nature is seen totally in terms of production, then we have serious ecological problems, as it is happening today. To meet our immediate industrial needs we are destroying the balance in nature. In the name of progress our earth is becoming less and less habitable for man, and we are the helpless victims of new diseases. We are alarmed by the discovery that the drugs, which were at one time considered to be life-savers, are today ineffective and at times even harmful. Since man is disrespecting nature, nature is hitting back.

Since nature is part of myself, I cannot destroy nature without at the same time destroying myself. I cannot be alienated from nature without being alienated from myself. This is exactly what is happening today. Contemporary man is afraid to be by himself. He finds silence unbearable. Our meetings are often an escape we need, and so they are very often noisy and superficial. Mental diseases are on the increase, and so are suicides. More and more young people are taking to drugs. Modern man is uprooted from nature, from his womb. He is restless, and so we have commercial agencies promoting cultural tours!

Unhealthy individuals result in unhealthy social relations. In the industrial sphere, just as we treat nature merely as a source of raw material, so too we treat men merely as part of our production machinery, merely as a source of labour. We reduce the person to a thing. Once we lose sight of man as person, then we are heading towards a major moral collapse. Let us return to Markandaya's novel. She is reporting a dialogue between her heroine and another village woman, Kunthi, who are discussing their village after it has been invaded by a tannery:

"Indeed no," said I, "for it is ever as I said, and our money buys less and less. As for living in a town—if town this be—why, there is nothing I would fly from sooner if I could go back to the sweet quiet of village life. Now it is all noise and crowds everywhere, and rude young hooligans idling in the street and dirty bazaars and uncouth behaviour, and no man thinks of another but schemes only for his money." "Words and words," said Kunthi.

"Stupid words. No wonder they call us senseless peasant women; but I am not and never will be. There is no earth in my breeding." "If there were you would be better for it," said I wrathfully, "for then your values would be true."<sup>52</sup>

In an industrial culture all that glitters is gold. We are in a real crisis, because we seem to be losing our true values. We see today an increase in all forms of violence, sexual perversion, breakdown of marriages and family life. Our sick, the aged and the handicapped have no place in a production-crazy world.

The loss of the sense of the personhood of man is the loss of real art, because authentic art is a non-useful activity, an expression of man's personhood.<sup>53</sup> At the most we can be artisans, producing newer and newer models, and the modern man is just waiting for the latest, because he thinks that novelty is creativity. He can neither create good art, nor can he appreciate good art. This is precisely the secret of the success of many industries. But as novelty cannot satisfy us, we are urged to consume more and more. We naively think that quantity can make up for quality. Modern man is a consumerist, consuming more than he really needs, unmindful of others who often do not have even the bare minimum.

Today we are faced with another problem: the loss of faith. There are many causes for this phenomenon. I believe that one very significant reason for contemporary atheism is man's alienation from nature. The industrial man is so sure of his machine and of his own ability to control production that he does not see the need for God. But there is a more profound reason: his actual distance from nature results in the atrophy of man's spiritual faculty. He is like a man who has never experienced love. He will find it extremely difficult to love, even if he has a full course on the psychology and theology of love! The alienation from nature almost destroys our capacity to wonder and our need of symbols, and this brings about unbelief.

Alienation from nature affects also those who still continue to believe: we have difficulties in prayer. The American Trappist, Thomas Merton, was greatly disturbed by the gradual mechanization of agriculture in his monastery, not only because the machines were making a lot of noise, but also because "they were limiting the monk's

52. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

53. See my "The Universal Call to Contemplation," *Vidyajyoti*, 41 (1977), pp. 414-18.

immediate contact with the soil and with nature, a contact which he thought essential for a viable life of prayer.<sup>54</sup> I believe that not only the monk but all of us need the touch of Mother Earth to discover contemplation. This is the reason why a Hindu removes his footwear when he stands in prayer or when he is engaged in some religious action, wherever that may be. This may also explain why, when in prayer, he prefers to sit on the ground rather than on a chair.

### *Mahatma Gandhi: a Post-Industrial Holistic Man*

The fact that India has called Gandhiji *mahātmā* (great soul), goes to show that he embodied the ideals of this land. We have seen that on the one hand the Hindu view of life is holistic, and, on the other, the modern industrial ethos tends to take man to pieces. The life of Mahatma Gandhi gives us a very concrete demonstration of the possibility even for the modern man to live a full human life. In him the ancient and the modern, contemplation and action, detachment and involvement, religion and politics meet in harmony.<sup>55</sup>

Gandhiji believed in the need to be close to nature. This is one of the reasons for the Ashram way of life he adopted. Here everyone is expected to work with his hands, for some time at least, every-day. Explaining his reason for this insistence, he writes:

No one asks the cultivator to take breathing exercise or to work his muscles. And more than nine-tenths of humanity lives by tilling the soil. How much happier, healthier and more peaceful would the world become, if the remaining tenth followed the example of the overwhelming majority, at least to the extent of labouring enough for their food. . . .

Bread labour is a veritable blessing to one who would observe non-violence, worship truth, and make the observance of brahmacharya a natural act. This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. . . .<sup>56</sup>

When we come close to nature we come close to life, and we learn to respect it: *ahimsā* (non-violence). When we respect life we discover *satya* (God), and so *ahimsā* is "the only means for the realization of Truth."<sup>57</sup>

54. D. Q. McINERNEY, *Thomas Merton*, Washington, Cistercian Studies, 1974, p. 52.

55. For the significance of Mahatma Gandhi for Christian theology, see my "A Prolegomenon to Theologizing in India Today," *Vidyajyoti*, 43 (1979), pp. 50-58.

56. M. K. GANDHI, *In Search of the Supreme*, ed. V. B. Kher, Ahmedabad, Navjivan Pb. House, 1961, vpl. II, pp. 113-14.

57. M. K. GANDHI, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, tr. M. Desai, Ahmedabad, Navjivan Pb. House, rep. 1982, p. 419.

For Gandhiji, *ahimsā* is not just a negative disposition: absence of violence. He clearly states that *ahimsā* is the same as Christian love.<sup>58</sup> We should not translate *ahimsā* as non-violence, but as *agapé*, because "In its positive form, Ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa I must love my enemy."<sup>59</sup> This all-embracing character of *ahimsā* implies a process of identifying oneself with everything that has life. Gandhiji tells us why he believes this: "I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives."<sup>60</sup> Thus for Gandhiji, *advaita* is the foundation of *ahimsā*. He who harms others harms himself. Gandhiji thinks that "the largest contribution of Hinduism to India's culture is the doctrine of Ahimsa."<sup>61</sup>

Since all life has only one life-giving Spirit, without this identification of love, it is not possible to know God. He who has no love excludes others from his heart, and therefore he also excludes God.<sup>62</sup> For the same reason the man who is in search of God cannot fragment reality, and so Gandhiji will say "without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."<sup>63</sup> If the doctrine of *ahimsā* is one of the key constituents of India's culture, then cow-protection is a symbol of this ideal, because "in its finer or spiritual sense the term cow protection means the protection of every living creature."<sup>64</sup> Conversely "every breach of the Ahimsa principle . . . would be a breach of the principle of cow protection."<sup>65</sup> If the reality signified is absent, then the symbol becomes absurd.

Though Gandhiji was in the thick of India's freedom struggle, yet he was a man of prayer. When there was violence all around him, he could still have confidence. Writing in 1931, he says:

In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact I have found people who envy my peace. That peace, I tell you, comes from prayer. I am not a man of learning but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer.<sup>66</sup>

58. *In Search of the Supreme*, vol. II, p. 33.

59. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 38.

60. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 55.

61. *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 26.

62. *An Autobiography*, p. 420.

63. *Loc. cit.*

64. *In Search of the Supreme*, vol. III p. 204.

65. *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 205.

66. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 186.

Gandhiji was truly a contemplative in action, one who was close to nature, close to God, close to his brothers and sisters, and in deep peace with himself. He could face himself and accept himself. His autobiography, an account of his experiments with truth, bears ample witness to this.<sup>67</sup>

*Agape: the Bond of Perfect Harmony*

Reading scholarly books, a Western seeker may get the impression that the way of contemplation (*jñāna-mārga*), as presented by the Upanishads and by some of their commentators, is the best contribution of India to the spiritual heritage of mankind. But going by what one actually observes, it is the way of love (*bhakti-mārga*) that seems to be the spiritual path for the majority of devout Hindus.<sup>68</sup>

The *bhakti* tradition, while accepting the earlier description of God as Being-Consciousness-Bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*), gives more importance to the aspect of Bliss. Because God is Bliss, He engages in joyful sport (*līlā*), just as a happy child engages in play. Hence this world is the sign of divine Bliss. But as bliss is not possible when one is alone, the Divine Reality is conceived as a couple: Shiva and Parvati, Vishnu and Lakshmi, but more commonly, Krishna and Radha. It is the loving union of the divine couple that gives birth to the divine bliss. Man can share in this divine bliss, if he too, like Radha, enters into a loving communion with Krishna.

The earthly life of Krishna and all his wonderful sports with the *gopīs* (cowherd girls) is meant to reveal to man the divine mystery of love, to attract man to share in this mystery. Because Krishna has walked on this earth, it is sacred to the *gopīs*, reminding them of their Beloved. When He is absent they can still continue their journey, encouraging each other through their *sat-saṅga*, through their holy communion, waiting for the final *SAT-saṅga*, their communion (*saṅga*) with Him who is the Truth (*Sat*), the moment of perfect

67. *An Autobiography*, p. x.

68. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, is a major *bhakti* text, and even today is very popular among devout Hindus. The following studies on this text by me may interest the reader: "Bhakti—the Bhāgavata Way to God," *Purana*, (1980), pp. 187-211. "The Universality and the Supremacy of Bhakti-yoga," *Purana*, 24 (1982), pp. 101-27.

wholeness.<sup>69</sup> But while man's journey through this world lasts, it is *bhakti* that gives unity to his life.<sup>70</sup>

The Bible tells us that God is love. Hence His creation is filled with love. It is wholesome: man and woman are naked because they fully trust each other: man and nature are in harmony; man walks with God. This is the wholeness of love, because love brings together two in a bond of communion. Of this original wholeness, non-duality, we have a symbol: man and woman when uniting in love become one flesh. Unfortunately, this wholeness was a fragile gift. By his pride, man breaks away from God, the source of love, and therefore of all wholeness. This brings about a fragmentation: man is frightened of his own companion; nature refuses to submit to man; man wants to run away from himself. God's cosmos becomes a chaos.


Because God is love, He does not abandon man. In Jesus, God's love becomes flesh, the earth becomes the body of our God. In Jesus we have the perfect *advaita*: He is God and man, Creator and creature. Already during his public life, nature responds to his love, but it is only when Jesus, in his love unto death, spreads out his hands on the cross to embrace the whole of God's creation, that nature becomes fully open to person, matter to spirit, man to man, creature to Creator. Jesus gathers together not only the lost children of Israel, but also the scattered fragments of humanity, and the broken pieces of God's creation. In his resurrection Jesus becomes fully what he is, the Son of God.<sup>71</sup> His resurrection is also the dawn of God's new creation, the foundation of a new earth and a new heaven.<sup>72</sup> This new creation will be consummated in the eschatological Kingdom, where God will be all in all. Then the holistic longing of India will be fully realized.

69. See my "Satsanga: the Company of Saints," in C. M. VADAKKELARA (ed.), *Prayer and Contemplation*, Bangalore, Asirvanam, 1980, pp. 273-310.

70. See my "Bhakti: a Meta-Puruṣārtha," *Jeevadhara*, 12 (1982), pp. 52-68.

71. See my "The Prayer of Jesus and His Resurrection," *Vidyajyoti*, 42 (1978), pp. 127-34.

72. See my "A Pre-Christian Easter Prayer," *Vidyajyoti*, 47 (1983), pp. 135-41.



## Human Relations Skills at the Service of Preaching

Fr Vincent PEREIRA\*

MANY of us have heard people say about one or another preacher, "His sermons are short and sweet". Most often what people like about a sermon is just that it was "short" perhaps because they have not been listening, anyway. Why is it that people stop listening? Why are we being confronted Sunday after Sunday with silent up-turned faces staring blankly beyond the preacher, if not glancing furtively at their watches? It is certainly not the message that is irrelevant. It is the manner of preaching or presentation that is ineffective.

The pulpit pounding, fire and brimstone preacher of old is a vanishing breed. Preachers today realise that they need to respect people in their uniqueness and respect too their right to determine in freedom the course of their lives. Preachers are aware that the complexity of modern living requires that they understand people in their life situations, while challenging them lovingly to live that new life in abundance which Jesus came to give (Jn 10:10).

Hence they need to discover a strategy whereby the goals of preaching are effectively realised, viz that people be supported and affirmed to make a free response to the good news, be converted from within (*metanoia*) and re-order their lives by the demands of effective love. Treating the congregation impersonally, as if those many faces were nothing better than a cluster of coconuts, is not helpful. Behind those pious masks are persons who are in fact eager to interact with the preacher, provided he can get on to their wavelength, confront and challenge them in such a manner that they feel free to accept, in an atmosphere of loving and caring, the truths or moral

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wisdom proposed, so that they can restructure their lives accordingly. In this article I will propose three models of human relations and communications skills as helps to improve our preaching. It is my belief, born out of experience, that if the preacher can somehow create an atmosphere as is supposed to prevail between mentor and pupil, counsellor and client, friend and friend, husband and wife, then he will enhance the effectiveness of his sermon and attain the goals of preaching.

### I. The Interpersonal Skills Model<sup>1</sup>

The first model described here is the one of Interpersonal Skills. According to it relationships build up or crumble depending on how effectively people utilize certain skills. Whether it is a relationship between a counsellor and client, husband and wife, teacher and pupil, friend and friend, the people involved grow and develop their potential because one or both of the parties involved have been using certain skills. Gerard Egan outlines the core skills necessary as follows:

#### SELF-PRESENTATION SKILLS

- Self-disclosure
- Concreteness
- Expression of Feelings

#### RESPONSE SKILLS

- Accurate Empathy
- Genuineness
- Respect

#### CHALLENGE SKILLS

- Advanced Accurate Empathy
- Confrontation
- Immediacy (direct "You-Me" talk)

I offer just a few examples of how using some of the skills can make preaching effective.

1. Take the skill of *self-disclosure*, for instance. Many of us are aware from our own experience how deeply touched we are when

1. See Carl ROGERS, *On Becoming a Person*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961; Gerard EGAN, *Interpersonal Lhng*, Monterey, California, Books/Cole, 1976.

some one shares with us not just abstract ideas but also personal experiences and feelings. Priests have been preaching for years condemning "drunkards", asking them to change their evil ways. The man in the pews to whom the sermon is directed remains unmoved. This same person may then find his way to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting where an alcoholic shares his messy life story, or to a charismatic group where someone gives a "testimony" about herself and the "drunkard" feels motivated to change his ways.

In a sermon I will never forget, a young priest once shared in a church full of people his doubts, uncertainties and moments of truth in his quest for God. A sermon like that, I thought to myself, needed courage. The sermon involved a risk but it was worth it. I sensed that many in the congregation were deeply impressed by what they heard. When a priest shares from the pulpit his own experiences, the behaviour he engages in, or the feelings that he has, without going on an "ego-trip", he establishes a certain mutuality with his audience. People do not feel he is talking at them from an "up-down" position. They meet in him a person who is conscious of his own weakness and limitations, one who is aware that he himself is in need of the very sermon he preaches. People then take heart and draw inspiration from his life and his response to God's word. St Paul, for example, uses self-disclosure when he says that "I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor 15:9). Other examples of his use of it are to be found in 2 Cor 10-13 and Gal 1-3.

2. *Accurate empathy* is an important skill when relating to the members of our congregation. Carl Rogers and others after him have shown that when we communicate to the client that we have understood him, he begins to feel safe. He is then open to explore the dark recesses of his being. He experiences the courage to deal with life's problems in a healthy and constructive way. Carl Rogers has also offered us the insight that there is a positive thrust in each one's life and that if we prize the client and not judge him, if we understand him in a warm and caring way, he is likely to make the necessary changes in his life without anybody goading him on.

In the past, some preachers dealt with the problem of alcoholism by berating the congregation, warning them about the ruin it caused. I know of a priest who even displayed a worm writhing and struggling for life in a glass of alcohol and thundered that this would be the sad end of the alcoholic, if he did not give up his evil drinking habits.

Such a manner of dealing with the problem shows little understanding of the inner struggle the alcoholic is going through. He feels judged and condemned even in the Church of God where he expected at least some measure of understanding and caring. Suppose a priest were to offer accurate empathy, the alcoholic would feel understood, valued and treated as a person. Imagine the impact of the following words of accurate empathy on a group of alcoholics: "Many of you have to work hard for long hours, earn very little money and come back tired to your poor homes where more problems await you. You feel trapped and miserable and don't seem to find a way out. A temporary solution offers itself—a few drinks with your fun-loving friends at the pub. You get drunk, come back home to an angry wife and starving children, go to bed and get up the next morning only to discover that your problems are even worse than on the day before. I guess you are tired of this vicious circle, wondering whether there is really any lasting solution to your problems . . ."

Recall the accurate empathy Jesus offered Zachaeus (Lk 19:1-10). Zachaeus did not have his evil deeds thrown into his face. He was not condemned. No moralising on the part of Jesus. Jesus understood and loved him and communicated this fact to him. Then the man changed radically.

3. Self-disclosure and accurate empathy are essential for two people who want to get close to each other. If there is however no *challenge and confrontation* in the relationship the two will not really grow as "fully functioning individuals". Without challenge and confrontation, two people may end up merely supporting and reinforcing each other's unhealthy feelings, psychological "games", dependencies, and so on. Confrontation between two people does not mean slinging verbal garbage into each other's faces and having a fight. Rather, for a relationship to be stimulated, developed and brought to a new level of growth, people need to be courageous enough to bring the other "face to face", which is what confrontation means, with something that the other needs to be aware of, encounter and deal with. This confrontation to be employed skillfully, requires empathic understanding as a base. The person confronted can then feel that the one challenging him is *for* him rather than *against* him. The trouble with a lot of the confrontation effected from the pulpit is that this solid base of caring, trust and understanding is missing. Hence the confrontation is often not well received. To say: "Why don't you stop drinking?! Don't you realise that you are drinking yourself to death

and ruining the lives of innocent members of your family?" would be far less effective than "I realise that you often drink in order to escape from your financial problems and to get some peace of mind. But, frankly, are you achieving this?"

Using this Interpersonal Skills model is hard enough in a one-to-one situation. It is even more challenging between the preacher and his audience. For the preacher cannot easily gauge the impact his words have on it, since immediate feedback is not easily available. Yet it is the preacher with interpersonal skills who is more likely to have his message accepted readily by his audience.

## II. The Transactional Analysis Model<sup>2</sup>

Many are familiar with the PAC diagram of ego states. The diagram shown on this page indicates the way we function from these ego states.

Specifically in each one of us there is a Parent ego state operating as Nurturing Parent (NP) or Controlling Parent (CP); there is the Adult (A) ego states through which we deal with data objectively; and there is the Child ego state which operates as Free Child (FC) or Adapted Child (AC), the latter functioning in either a "Compliant" or "Rebellious" fashion.

The preacher in spite of having different options as regards ego-state functioning often chooses to operate from the Controlling or Critical Parent, and that too in a rather negative fashion. The pulpit pounder is busy telling people, "If you don't come for Mass on Sunday you commit a mortal sin," "You are doing the work of the devil when you . . ." After the reading of wedding banns they are sternly warned regarding marriage impediments that they are "bound in conscience to make these known to your parish priest as soon as possible." With this Controlling Parent approach the chances are that he will hook the Adapted Child in many of his hearers. This means that a certain percentage of them will comply with what he says and the rest will rebel against it. Both responses are unsatis-



2. See Oswald SUMMERTON, *Transactional Analysis, Basic Concepts*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1979; Muriel JAMES and Dorothy JONGEWARD, *Born to Win*, Addison, Wesley Publishing Company Inc., 1980.

factory as far as the goals of preaching are concerned. If they rebel the preacher has failed in his sermon. If they slavishly comply then they are far from the *metanoia* or "conversion from within" or "free response to God's word" that one hopes to evoke through preaching. Thus is defeated the very purpose of preaching by the exaggerated and negative use of the Controlling Parent. A free and open response can be elicited by being Nurturing from the pulpit or by giving Adult information or by a Free Child sense of humour. Talking about humour, many people think they must put on a very serious face and withhold from themselves permission to be in their Free Child. This is a way of reducing the impact of preaching. Using the Free Child the preacher often has very creative possibilities of communicating deep religious truths. I am reminded of the Marathi saying "*hassat, hassat dāt pādne*" ("amidst peals of laughter to knock off a person's teeth").

A valuable concept from the T.A. model is that of "strokes". It is almost an axiom of T.A. that if a child is not stroked its spinal cord shrivels up. A stroke is a unit of recognition which provides stimulation to an individual. Our hunger for strokes is perhaps as strong as our hunger for food. Our need for them is so great that if we do not get positive (pleasant) strokes we will at least strive to get negative (painful) strokes which are better than no strokes at all.

It is certainly embarrassing, to say the least, to think that many stroke-starved parishioners come to receive at least the "kicks" that the clergyman stoutly delivers from the pulpit. One way to gauge the health of a family or parish community is to measure the amount of positive stroking going on among the members of that family or community. The priest as leader of the parish community certainly has plenty of opportunities from the pulpit to communicate his appreciation of the good qualities his parishioners have and the laudable deeds they perform. In this way he reinforces healthy behaviour among them. The giving of negative strokes for undesirable behaviour only reinforces the very behaviour that is sought to be eradicated. By contrast, an effective spotting of healthy and desirable behaviour and the giving of positive strokes for it only helps to increase and develop such behaviour. Any situation would have a positive and a negative aspect. One can look at a bottle as half empty (negative) or half full (positive). A skillful preacher will emphasize the positive. A sermon, for example, on social justice in which the preacher faults the congregation for not being aware of

the problem and not doing what they ought about it is counter productive. It creates unhelpful guilt feelings or hooks the *Rebellious Child*. Whereas a sermon which shows recognition of their slightest efforts in this line only encourages the people to strive towards the ideals of social justice.

### III. The N.L.P. Model<sup>3</sup>

It is a truism that "there is nothing in the intellect which does not first pass through the senses." One insight that we get from the Neuro Linguistic Programming (N.L.P.) model is that people often have a favoured or preferred sense through which they take in reality. For example, a predominantly "visual" person will *describe* his visit to the zoo in terms of what he saw: "there was a *beautiful* sign on which was *written* 'Welcome'. In the zoo we *looked at* lots of lions and tigers. They *appeared* very ferocious. I could'nt for one moment *see* myself as a keeper of the zoo . . ." Another person with a predominantly "auditory" way of taking in reality may speak about the zoo in terms of *hearing*: "We went to the zoo on a school holiday. There was the *loud chatter* and *laughter* of children. The lions gave a *deafening roar* by way of welcome. The keepers *shouted* to the children not to get near . . ."

A "kinesthetic" person who takes in reality through touch and feeling, may give us his *impressions* of his visit thus: "I had a lot of *mixed feelings* as I *stepped* into the zoo. I had a *creepy sensation* when I *stroked* the elephant's trunk. The lions were in a *good mood* and I felt quite *at home*. When I *came close* to the snake's section, *instinctive reaction* was to *flee* . . ."

These three people are as it were talking three different languages. As the visual person *describes* what he *sees*, it may be hard for the kinesthetic person to *grasp* and *get a feel* for what is happening or for the auditory person to *be in tune* with and *echo* and *respond* to what the other is *saying*. Each one is locked up in his own representational system.

Any congregation would be made up of visual, auditory and kinesthetic persons. If, for example, a predominantly visual preacher

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3. See Stephen R. LANKTON, A.C.S.W., *Practical Magic*, Cupertino, California, Neta Publications, 1980; Leslie CAMERON-BANDLER, *They Lived Happily Ever After*, Cupertino, California, Neta Publications, 1978:

*focuses on the Gospel scene and describes what he sees, then it may be hard for the kinesthetic person to grasp the Gospel episode or let it take root and grow in his heart. A preacher therefore has to integrate the different representational systems in his sermon, to describe the Gospel scene, to narrate what he hears people saying and to help the audience sense and have a feel for what is really going on.*

An important concept or technique of N.L.P. is known as the "therapeutic metaphor". Messages often get across to people very forcefully when expressed in metaphor. Take the case of Jim who brushed aside compliments paid to him, not allowing them to nourish him. His rationalization was that he had received the compliment from the same person earlier. The therapist told him the story of Ramu who refused a chappati from his wife because he had had one from her the previous day. Jim then got the message all right: it was OK for him to take and enjoy the compliments that were being given to him, even though they were repeated. Jesus made effective use of what the N.L.P. exponents have termed "therapeutic metaphor". We have only to consider the Parables like "the Prodigal Son". Christianity as well as the great religions and cultures of the world have made ample use of the story form to express the otherwise inexpressible thoughts and sentiments.

Some of these "therapeutic metaphors" may be culled from anecdotes of the great, from everyday happenings, from the preacher's own personal experiences or from the storehouse of one's own creativity. Whatever the mode, the story becomes a kind of projection of the hearer's own life, with its problems analysed and solutions devised. This is done in a safe and non-threatening manner. In the process, the hearer finds himself being more objective and unbiased when confronting problems in the story which really are his own. Thus when Nathan used a "therapeutic metaphor" to confront David for having taken the wife of Uriah, David was the one who pronounced judgement on himself (2 Sam 12). What is important in the choice or construction of the therapeutic metaphor is to find points in the story that correspond to the problem the hearers are facing and to the solutions that are available to them.

The skills described in this article are not new and skills alone will not make an effective preacher. More important than *how* he communicates is *what* he communicates. But skills are indispensable if the content of what is preached is to bear fruit.

# The Trinity: A Single Absolute Subject or a Community of Subjects?

Fr. Thomas DABRE\*

## The Emergence of the Subject

Modern humanism is founded on a heightened sense of human subjectivity. From Descartes onwards modern thinkers have been interpreting human reality in terms of subjectivity.<sup>1</sup> Subjectivity is an essential feature of the twentieth-century sciences. The end of colonialism, the rise of the oppressed, and the third world, all witness to the new-found sense of human subjectivity. This shift in human perception and the changed ethos of our culture demand that we employ an appropriate paradigm in our reflections on the trinitarian mystery of God. Karl Barth and Karl Rahner among others have raised fundamental questions about the adequacy, the intelligibility and the relevance of the traditional formulation: "one substance three persons". However, the answers they propose neither seem to do full justice to the biblical account and its interpretation in tradition, nor can they be reconciled with the present-day emphasis on the relationality of the subject. Lonergan and Moltmann have serious objections to their emphasis on a single subjectivity in God. They emphasise that there are three subjects in God. The stress of Barth and Rahner on the unity of the absolute divine subject is perfectly in line with the Western preoccupation with the individuality of the person. It also supports the West's characteristic objective approach to reality. Down the ages India has lived by the value of subject or self (*ātman*). Lonergan's and Moltman's stress on speaking of God in terms of three subjects appears to have better relevance to our characteristic Indian thought-patterns.

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1. Cf. James BROWN, *Subject and Object in Modern Theology*, New York, Macmillan, 1955.



### Karl Barth

Barth understands a person as the centre of one's activity. There cannot be three such centres in God. That would result in tritheism. The classical or traditional understanding of Tertullian's formula, one substance, three persons, can today only be misunderstood in terms of tritheism because a person today means a single individual subject as a centre of activity. In this sense God is only one single person. The Father, Son and Spirit are the three modes of His being. "God is one in three modes of being, Father, Son and Spirit."<sup>2</sup> In Barth's theology the accent is on the one single reality of God. It is this one single divine reality that exists in a threefold way: "What properly subsists is, of course, not the person as such, but God in the three persons, or rather: God properly subsisting as threefold."<sup>3</sup> Barth is certainly uncomfortable with the tri-personality of God. What properly subsists is not the persons but the one God in a threefold way.

Barth understands God's threefoldness as Father, Son and Spirit in terms of a threefold repetition. "The name of Father, Son and Spirit means that God is the one God in a threefold repetition . . ."<sup>4</sup> Barth maintains that his reinterpretation is true to biblical account and to tradition. He particularly seeks a confirmation of his position in the Cappadocian Fathers who spoke of *persona* or *hypostasis* or *prosopon*, in terms of *tropoi hyparxeos*, i.e., modes of coming to be.

The traditional presentation of the Trinity has nothing to do with the affirmation of three personalities in God. It was mainly concerned with the sovereignty and subjectivity of the one divine reality. According to Barth,

'Person' in the sense of the Church doctrine of the Trinity has nothing directly to do with 'Personality'. Thus the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity is not that there are three personalities in God. That would be the most pointed expression of tritheism. . . The doctrine of the personality of God, of course, goes along with the doctrine of the Trinity in so far as. . . the utmost care is taken, by the trinitarian repetitions of the knowledge of the lordship of God, to prevent the divine He or rather Thou from becoming in any way an It. But in it we are speaking not of three divine 'I's', but thrice of the one divine I.<sup>5</sup>

2. Karl BARTH, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics, Vol I, Part I, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, p. 413.

3. This translation is taken with a modification, from Bernard Lonergan, *De Deo Trinito II: Pars Systematica* (1964), trans. by John Fr. Brenzovec, mimeographed, p. 163.

4. BARTH, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

## Claude Welch

Welch gives the main outline of the trinitarian faith of the various Christian churches.<sup>6</sup> He states that the trinitarian faith is the central feature of the Christian revelation. Following mainly the Barthian reformulation of the trinitarian faith, he attempts a reconstruction of the traditional presentation. He denies "that the notion of the three divine 'persons' or 'personalities' is an accurate explication of the New Testament witness. . ."<sup>7</sup> Welch prefers to speak of the unity of God as "personal unity."<sup>8</sup> In God there is only one absolute subject. "The Biblical God is One Subject, One Thou, One Being."<sup>9</sup> Here you have an unqualified affirmation of a single divine subjectivity.

Personality belongs properly to the one essential reality of God and not to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is the one Lord and Saviour who meets us. We must affirm that "the 'personality' of God belongs to his unity, to his essence. . ."<sup>10</sup> In God there is only one subject and personality to whom the Thou can be addressed. Father, Son and Spirit are modes of divine being or existence.<sup>11</sup> The use of *persona* and *hypostasis* in tradition indicated the depth of distinctions between the Father, Son and Spirit.

## Karl Rahner

Today, a person means a spiritual centre of activity. Hence, the divine persons are open to the danger of being conceived tritheistically. The present-day understanding is different from the accepted sense of person in tradition, namely, *subsistens distinctum in natura rationali* ("that which subsists as distinct in a rational nature"). For us a person has an independent consciousness. In God there is only one act of consciousness. Three persons today can be construed as three consciousnesses.

Since Father, Son and Spirit are absolutely unique, it is not lawful to apply a generalized concept of person to them. What is general or common to the three is only the one Godhead.

6. Cf. Claude WELCH, *The Trinity in Contemporary Theology*, London, SCM Press Ltd., 1953.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 188, 274-276

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When we say: 'there are three persons in God, God subsists in three persons', we generalize and add up something which cannot be added up, since that which alone is common to Father, Son and Spirit is precisely the one and only Godhead, and since there is no higher point of view from which the three can be added as Father, Son, and Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

Rahner says that the generalization of the three in terms of persons is a logical explanation of the original experience of salvation history. The Father was experienced as God. The Son was experienced as God; and the Spirit was experienced as God. Given the primacy of the experience of the one saving God, what is basic is the one self-communication of God given in three manners. "The one self-communication of the one God occurs in three different manners of givenness, in which the one God is given concretely for us in himself. . ."<sup>13</sup> What this means is that the three, namely, Father, Son and Spirit, are the three manners in which the one God offers Himself to us for our salvation. Speaking in terms of the immanent Trinity, Rahner formulates, "the one God subsists in three distinct manners of subsisting."<sup>14</sup> What is accentuated is the unity of the divine substance.

### Bernard Lonergan

Lonergan points out to three areas where the subject is neglected. 1. The Aristotelian notion of science and the rationalist notion of pure reason: from self-evident premisses necessary and certain conclusions are drawn. The personal dispositions or interests of the subject considering the self-evident principles do not count. 2. The metaphysics of soul: philosophers dwell on the potencies, habits, acts and objects of the human soul. Human beings, plants, animals, are all alike studied as objective realities. The state, condition, situation and quality of the human persons are not regarded important to this consideration. 3. The objectivity of truth: a preoccupation with the objectivity of truth results in the neglect of the role of the subject in the attainment of truth.<sup>15</sup> With his recognition of the shift towards the subject in recent times, Lonergan prefers to speak of the divine three as Subjects.

12. Karl RAHNER, *The Trinity*, trans. by Joseph Doncel, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970, p. 104.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Cf. Bernard LONERGAN, "The Subject," in *Lonergan, A Second Collection*, by William F.J. RYAN and Bernard J. TYRRELL, (eds), Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1974, pp. 69-86.

Since the earliest times (Tertullian with his use of *persona* and the Greek Fathers with their use of *prosopon*, *hypostasis* and *hyparxeos*) the Church was struggling to speak of the three as three subjects. Lonergan develops his tract on the Trinity mainly in terms of divine consciousness and intellectual emanations. The three are within the one single divine consciousness. God is conscious; He consciously understands, knows and wills. The Father, Son and Spirit are God. Therefore, each one of the three consciously understands, knows and wills.<sup>16</sup>

There are three conscious subjects within the one single act of divine consciousness. It is, however, on the basis of their opposed relations that the three are distinct subjects:

The Father is conscious both of the Son and of the Spirit in one way. The Son is conscious of the Father and of the Spirit in another way; and the Spirit is conscious both of the Father and the Son in yet another way.<sup>17</sup>

Lonergan dismisses the Barthian modes of being as not being personal enough. One cannot pray to a mode of being. The Bible, however, clearly witnesses to the Thou of the Father and of the Son. The Spirit, being consubstantial with the two, can also be addressed to as Thou. The three Thou being God are three subsisting subjects in whom a single consciousness "is differently possessed."<sup>18</sup> Barth, who places an exclusive emphasis on the one single absolute divine subject, does not see how a person as such (*die Person als solche*) can exist in the divinity. Lonergan strongly disagrees with Barth on this point precisely because he is able to take a serious account of the opposition of relations in the divinity.<sup>19</sup>

### Jurgen Moltmann

Moltmann too is not satisfied with the emphasis of Barth and Rahner on the single, absolute subject in God. Their model, in his view, is based on the structure of human reflection. As such, it is not in the end specifically biblical. For Moltmann, Barth is in the Hegelian cast of mind. The one identical, divine subject is a perfect subject who can relate to Himself in an eternal process of self-differ-

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16. LONERGAN, *De Deo Trino II*, p. 158.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

19. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

entiation and self-identification on which is founded God's self-revelation and self-communication. The trinitarian speculation of Barth and Rahner is in line with the bourgeois culture's emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of the individual. It is, however, out of tune with the growing recognition of interdependence and social relationships. Moltmann writes:

To carry on with the more modern 'subject' Trinity is not in fact very fruitful either, because modern thinking in terms of 'subject' is increasingly losing force and significance. Anthropological thinking is giving way to the new, relativistic theories about the world, and anthropocentric behaviour is being absorbed into social patterns. 'The belief that the most important thing about experience is the experiencing of it, and about deeds the doing of them, is beginning to strike most people as naive.' The world of growing interdependencies can no longer be understood in terms of 'my private world'. Today the appeal to pure subjectivity is viewed as an inclination towards escapism.<sup>20</sup>

According to Moltmann, the biblical witness affirms the divine three to be three subjects. He sees the subjectivity of the Spirit also suggested in Paul's writings where the distinct personality of the Spirit has been a point of theological controversy. Paul presents the Spirit as a centre of activity. The Spirit glorifies and unifies the Father and the Son. The history of salvation is the renewing and liberating activity of the Spirit.

By renewing men and women, by bringing about their new solidarity and fellowship, and by delivering the body from death, the Holy Spirit glorifies the risen Lord and, through him, the Father. This glorification of the Father through the Son in the Spirit is the consummation of creation.<sup>21</sup>

The Spirit is more than an energy of the Father and the Son. He is the self-conscious, independent subject of activity. His activity affects the Father and the Son and the minds and hearts of the believers. The Spirit is the *glorifying* and *unifying* God and, therefore, It

is not an energy proceeding from the Father or from the Son; it is a subject from whose activity the Son and the Father receive their glory and their union, as well as their glorification through the whole creation, and their world as their eternal home. If the Holy Spirit means the *subject* who glorifies the Father and the Son, and unites the Father and the Son, then the

20. Jurgen MOLTSMANN, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, The Doctrine of God, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981, p. 19. The quotation within the quotation is from R. MUSIL, *The Man without Qualities*, ET Secker & Warburg 1953-60, Vol. I, p. 175.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

'exegetical question' should be capable of solution as well. For in this respect Paul too in fact understands the Holy Spirit as the centre of the act, which is to say as 'person'.<sup>22</sup>

It is a distinctive Biblical testimony that the one God is three subjects and the three subjects are one God. Moltmann thinks that the reality of the divine substance may not be considered as being logically primary in comparison with the three persons or subjects.<sup>23</sup> In their attempt to ward off the danger of tritheism, both Barth and Rahner place their main emphasis on the unity of divine reality. That, however, according to Moltmann, makes them vulnerable to the charge of reducing the trinitarian persons to mere aspects of the one subject. In order to do justice to the biblical testimony, Moltmann proposes that we dispense with the concept of one substance and one absolute subject. We should, rather, focus on the "the unitedness, the at-oneness of the triune God."<sup>24</sup> In one God there is "the personal self-differentiation, . . . for only persons can be at one with one another, not modes of being or modes of subjectivity."<sup>25</sup> Moltmann develops a social doctrine from the Trinity based on salvation history. It is "the trinitarian history of God in the concurrent and joint workings of the three subjects, Father, Son and Spirit" and it is "the history of God's trinitarian relationships of fellowship."<sup>26</sup> Moltmann affirms Rahner's thesis that "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa."<sup>27</sup> The history of salvation is the history of God. It is the history of the relationships among Father, Son and Spirit. The three are both personal and social in salvation history. The immanent reality of God is the perichoretic unity of the three divine subjects.<sup>28</sup>

### Critical Comments

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not philosophical monotheism. Philosophical monotheism, though a fascinating proposition, may be manipulated to subserve the interests of an egoistic and individualistic way of life. An open relationship based on giving and sharing, communion and fellowship, is essential to the biblical con-

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22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p. 16.

24. Ibid., p. 150.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 156.

27. Ibid., p. 160.

28. Ibid., p. 150.

ception of trinitarian and historical, and not philosophical and idealistic, monotheism.

Nicea never doubted the subjective reality of the Son though it affirmed His divinity in terms of "*homoousios*". The Council of Constantinople focuses on the subjective character of the Spirit when it teaches His divinity in terms of "the giver of life".

There will admittedly be difficulties and limitations in our humble attempts to understand the trinitarian mystery. However, we must agree on the fact that the Father, the Son and the Spirit should never be conceived as being impersonal or infra-personal. In particular, the Spirit cannot be reduced to an energy or power of God. Incidentally, the conception of the Spirit as a soul or *âtman* is incorrect.<sup>29</sup> The Spirit is one who is spirated, i.e., breathed by the Father and the Son. He is Spirit because He *proceeds* from the Father and the Son.

It is not divine sovereignty but love that is in focus in the trinitarian revelation. The biblical account testifies that the three are united both in their historical commitment and immanent reality by their mutual love. The Father gives His divine reality in love to the Son. The Son surrenders Himself to the Father. The Spirit glorifies and unifies the Father and the Son. The Greek concept of *perichoresis* is best suited to express the Biblical witness to the Trinity. The Father subsists in the Son; the Son subsists in the Father; the Father and the Son subsist in the Spirit; and the Spirit subsists in the Father and the Son. Such is the unitedness, the perichoretic unity or mutual indwelling (*circuminsessio*) of the divine subjects. Therefore, both the differences and the unity of the three are to be seen more especially in their being three distinct subjects in a dynamic relationship.

Theology should not be manipulated to legitimise a particular social system. The function of the sacred science is to dare a prophetic critique of the excesses of any accepted system. A fresh approach to our trinitarian faith in terms of trinitarian inter-subjectivity will inspire us to steer clear of the capitalist exaggeration of individuality and also of communist or socialist totalitarianism. Social reconstruction is inseparable from subjective self-realization.

Contemporary theology's passionate concern with liberation and new structures has an evangelical justification. What must, however, be

29. In Indian languages, the Spirit is understood as *âtman* or soul.

30. Cf. MOLTMAN, p. 176.

borne in mind is that it is renewed and liberated subjects who create new and humane structures and these latter in turn will lead to a further liberation of subjects. Otherwise, the oppressed who revolt against their oppressors, themselves end up becoming oppressors, though in the name of a different system. The Christian experience of divine salvation is, in the final analysis, the personal and collective realization of man's potential for truth and love, namely, human subjectivity in all its integral dimensions. Genuine subjective fulfilment leads to the realization of a new community based on interrelationships and fellowship in true equality of persons. The conception of the Trinity in terms of intersubjectivity is an inspiring model for human living. The promise and the possession of the trinitarian subjects makes the possibility of the completion of relational human subjectivity an actuality and realizable destiny.

### Indian Perspectives

The Indian search for salvation has been a search for a new subject. The highest goals of human existence are called *puruṣārthas*, i.e., they are for the sake of the self or the subject. The Brahman is the Paramātman, i.e., the highest self. The liberated man realizes that his true self is the self of Brahman (*aham brahmāsmi*).<sup>31</sup> Both *advaita*, with its stress on *ātmaśhithi* (the state of the self) or *ātmānubhava* (the experience of the self), and *bhakti*, with its stress on *prema* (love) and *śaraṇa* (surrender), seek the highest subjective self-realization of man. The *bhakta* also seeks his self-fulfilment in a dual relationship:

... this indeed, You grant me, namely, that there be no interruption in this I-Thou relationship.<sup>32</sup>

The *advaita* and *bhakti* interpretation of truth and reality has all along been in terms of the self. It is the self or subject that is at the heart of reality. The emphasis of Moltmann and Lonergan on the subjectivity of the three in their firm rejection of the interpretation of the three as being three modes or manners is of special significance from the Indian point of view. Ultimate reality is totally and perfectly subjective. Persons are never the repetition, as Barth thinks, of an essential reality. Each person is unique, irreplaceable and unrepeatable. The modes of being (Barth) or the manners of subsisting

31. *Bṛhad. Up.*, 1.4.10.

32. *Sri Tukarambavānchya Abhangānchi Gāthā*, Mumbai, Shasakīya Madhyavartī Mudranālaya, 1973, abhangā 150.



(Rahner) sound impersonal or infra-personal which God can never be. It strikes us as an impoverishment of the rich reality of the Father, the Son and the Spirit to reduce them to modes of being or manners of subsisting. God can be spoken of as being personal or trans-personal. The formulations of Barth and Rahner are hard to appreciate in view of the two divine missions. The activity of the Son in the history of salvation and that of the Spirit in the subjective realization of the same are too personal to be attributed to modes of being or manners of subsisting.

Down the ages, Indian culture has been characterized by a sense of collectivity or community. The individual human person lived as a member of a joint family or larger village community. The *varṇa vyavasthā* (the class system) or the *jāti dharma* (one's caste duty) concretized India's community sense. The Gita calls upon man to transcend his egoistic individualism when it says, "Or if again you consider the welfare (and coherence) of the world (*lokasaṃgraha*), then you should work (and act)." The wise man longs "to bring about the welfare (and coherence) of the world (*lokasaṃgraha*)."<sup>33</sup> By way of simplification, it may be said that individuality is a Western category and community is an Indian one. The Christian conception of the Divine as a community is congruous with the characteristic community ethos of India.<sup>34</sup>

33. *The Bhagavad Gita*, 3: 20, 25. Trans. by R.C. ZAEHNER, London, Oxford University Press, 1969.

34. For a critical appreciation of the characteristic Indian ethos, cf. Richard LANNON, *The Speaking Tree, A Study of Indian Culture and Society*, London/Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1971.

## Forum

### An Artist's Response to the Question of an Indian Church

I read with interest the article on Evangelization written by Fr Sevananda in the Forum of VIDYAJYOTI, December 1983. I also read the reactions to this article by Fr Angelo Devadas (May 1984) and Sister Sara Grant (January 1985), with both of whom I have had personal discussions on this question of how the Church in India should relate to a predominantly Hindu society. As an artist working almost exclusively for the Church in India for the last 20 years, I have often asked myself, "What is the Church?" Of course, the immediate answer to that question might be "that building", or "those missionaries who are trying to spread the gospel through every means available."

As an artist, I have been personally involved in "that building". I have designed churches, altars, tabernacles, stations of the Cross, fonts, and so on. My work is to design all that very visible world which we associate with the "visible" Church. I have also, as an artist, been concerned with that more nebulous task of "spreading the Gospel", through illustrations, book covers, catechetical pictures, meditation booklets, and so forth. I am involved in the media which the Church uses. But I still do not feel clear about what the visible Church stands for, and how it relates to the culture, religious or secular, in which it finds itself. Does the Church try to merge into its surroundings, like a creature in nature tries to blend with its environment? Or does the Church want to stand out, to transform the countryside by its presence, giving a new focus to the way in which we see the land in which it has been planted?

A Hindu scholar once said to me: "The Church was the first multinational company to exploit India." There are those who see the Church as a political force, having its own social ideology. Others see the Church as a tool in the hands of Western interests. Did Christ found the Church? Hindus, like Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, have told me that though they deeply admire the Christ of the Gospels, they do not like the Church. In fact they do not see any connection between the Jesus of the Gospels and the visible, institutional Church which they see in India. This, I would think, is quite a common Hindu perception.

But what do Christian scholars think? We are told that the concept of the Church differs even in the Gospels. Luke saw the Church

as the "people of God"—*ho laos*. This "people" had its origin not in Jesus, but in God. And God chose a people from the very dawn of history, as we find in the Old Testament itself. And it was to redeem this pre-existent Church that Jesus was born and carried out his ministry. This concept of the pre-existent Church (found also in the Apocalypse, and in the ancient belief concerning the "harrowing of hell") is to be contrasted with, though supplemented by, Matthew's ecclesiology. Matthew sees the Church as the creation of the risen Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit. It is in this eschatological sense that we are to understand the Church against which nothing can prevail. That Church in a way is as yet unrealized, it is in the process of becoming, its seeds are planted and are mysteriously hidden in the institutions which we see; but let us not confuse that true Church which is to come and the visible structured Church which we see.

As an artist, designing for the Church, using images and symbols to try and express my own personal faith in Jesus, I have come to a realisation that the very visible images and concrete structures which I try to make, are part of this profound pilgrimage which is the Church of the Way, the Church in search of its fulfilment. The images and signs which constitute the "visible" church are not an end in themselves, they are a means, a way, a hope, which point to that which lies beyond the visible. The following points, which I have come to realize through my work, may be of interest to others sharing in this pilgrimage.

1. The Church does not own the Image of Jesus. The Church does not own the Gospels. It has no copy-rights. The tendency of the Church to capitalise on Jesus and His Message is itself unchristian. The Church cannot even claim to be the only, or even principal, interpreter of the meaning of the Gospel. There are many outside the official confines of the structured Church who have deep insights into the meaning of the Gospels, and a profound experience of the Presence of Jesus.
2. The idea of a pre-existent Church means that because Jesus enters into a social reality, the already existing patterns of community life are already a body of believing and holy people. Thus the "people of God", of the Old Testament formed a pattern for the Lucan ecclesiology. What about ancient Indian patterns of community or corporate life, such as we find in the Buddhist *sangha*, or the Hindu *sar-sangh*, *sampradāya* or *ashram*? Do these not provide us with models of holy people, with saints and patterns of worship, which could provide us with a Church, to which Jesus comes to announce his Gospel. It is not so much the "Unknown Christ of Hinduism", as the "Unknown Church of India."
3. The Christ-centred Church is founded on the mysteries of Baptism and Communion, and the ministries of the Church. Danielou points out in his book *Primitive Christian Symbols*, that early Chris-

tian art is an expression of the mysteries of Baptism and Communion—the basic sacraments on which all Church architecture is constructed. The way in which the sacraments of Baptism and Communion have been understood, has itself determined the character of the ministries institutionalized in the various churches, and consequently the structure of church buildings. This we can see clearly by comparing Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches.

In my own concern for an Indian Christian Church, I have argued that "indianizing" the church structure is not just a matter of replacing a neo-gothic style church building, with a Hindu Gopuram or Sikhara over the holy of holies. A building, particularly what I call a "holy habitat", is a microcosm reflecting community's understanding of its whole relationship to the environment, which includes the whole universe. This "holy habitat" represents in miniature the relationship of the human person to the cosmos. This cosmology has emerged out of a long cultural evolution. What we call a Christian cosmology, as found, for example, in the world-view of Dante and even, in our own times, of Teilhard de Chardin, has its roots in the ancient cosmologies developed in Egypt, Greece, Rome, nor to mention many other Middle Eastern civilizations. There is no reason why Indian cosmologies could not also influence our understanding of the universe in which we live. But we must proceed thoughtfully, considering in what way the various perspectives can be integrated into a living experience. This is precisely the difference between synthesis and a rather casual pluralism which is not concerned with arriving at a new whole, but simply with collecting various viewpoints.

4. Finally, images, forms of worship, community structures, etc., are not in themselves Christian or unchristian. There is nothing particularly Christian about the form of a Byzantine, Romaneque, or Gothic church. We know that the various styles and symbols used in Christian art have been very much influenced by pre-Christian Greek, Etruscan or Celtic art. Art remains profoundly secular, and by that we mean conditioned by its historical and cultural matrix. The locally available materials, climate, myths, languages, political systems, all have played their part in creating what we call a local culture. Christianity should be incarnated in what lies at the heart of a cultural tradition, transforming but not destroying it. The Christian Gospel has to be embodied, and it is this physical presence which gives to Christianity its secular thrust. The danger of the Church occurs, I suspect, when it becomes too religious, forgetting its secular roots in the human habitat.

As far as I can see, the Church should be a *Presence* in community. We, Christian artists, have on several occasions discussed what our art *represents*. There is a representational element to all visible images. There is a narrative element to the visible creation—a His-story or Her-story. The person looking at the picture may well ask, "What is it all about? Tell me the story of how this image came

to be the way you have represented it." There are many ways of answering such a question. There is a subjective story as well as an objective story, and often these two stories are on different planes, never quite meeting. But, ultimately, the Image does not represent anything. It is. It is in the present. It is something you cannot define. It is a Presence, a fathomless Now. Jesus is here, that is what we want to say. It is this Presence which the visible church should enshrine. This Presence is not something rational, or even ethical. It is discovered as a relationship, something in between subjects and object, a kind of all-pervading Seer who cannot be seen.

### *The Church as Metaphor*

Not only sacred Scripture, but the visible Church itself uses "metaphor". The church (and by that I mean the visible, tangible church) is a metaphor, or, as Charles Correa suggested in a conversation I had with him recently, it is a *signal*. It is not just a functional building, but it gathers people together, it gives them an experience. Sacred architecture is meant to give an experience of spiritual dimensions. To enter a sacred place is in some way to have a spiritual experience, to enter the dream world of the inner human person. That is why the basic structure of a temple, or church, represents in a visible way a journey which is also an inner journey, from Baptism to Eucharist and Real Presence. It is this sense of the Real Presence which gives to the art-experience its spiritual dimension. The image speaks to the Now and Here, even though what the image depicts may represent some event belonging to another time—the past or future. So the Presence is a heightened awareness of the Present, the only Time when a truly ethical decision can be made. Now is the acceptable time, for repentance as well as celebration.

The Hindu temple has developed in a warm, open-air climate, whereas the Western Church emerged from a northern, cold climate. Climate is important, for it affects our understanding of the building as shelter, as human habitation. The Western building is an enclosed box, shutting out the unfriendly world. There is also a tendency to reject the secular, to shut out the temporal world as "profane". I link this also with a rejection of the body as such, which is the most secular reality that we know. The Hindu temple or Buddhist *vihara* does not reject the physical, external world in this way. This may be a result of the tradition of yoga. The Indian holy place almost embraces the outer world by throwing itself open on every side to the throbbing, vital community which appears to encroach on it from every side. The symbolic eyes painted on the Buddhist stupa look out onto the community.

Whereas the West-facing entrance of the Gothic church is also the place for the baptistry, often situated in a dark area of the

church, the Eastern holy place is characterised by open light-filled halls near the entrance, where pilgrims can gather, and festivals can be arranged. Proceeding into the Gothic church we move from the low ceilinged vestibule of the West Front, up the aisle, to the lofty light-filled area of the sanctuary. The journey into the Eastern holy place is quite the reverse. As we go in further, the roof of the pillared halls becomes lower, the pillars themselves are less and less elaborately carved, until finally the Holy of Holies, or *Garbhagriha*, gives the impression of a dark cave, without windows, lit only by the flickering lamps of the sanctuary.

I am convinced that in Indian culture, and Far Eastern culture generally, the entry point into the Holy is the shared community meal. Food is life, it gives strength for the way (*viaticum*). We are reminded of Jesus's concern for the crowds who were hungry, "Give them something to eat." This hunger is not just physical, it is spiritual too. Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the leaves" (Jn 6:26). Here we are led to believe that the People of God sought Jesus because of the multiplication of the leaves and fishes, itself a foretaste of the Eucharist. They hungered for Truth, that is why they followed him, not just to see a spectacular miracle-worker. It is a spiritual hunger which drove them. And so the Holy Place satisfies this basic need for life-giving and sustaining food. It is this food that gives strength to the pilgrim in the desert. The community meal is a metaphor for this deeper longing to be part of the Body of the Lord.

It is only after receiving this food that the soul is able to take the long and arduous journey inwards to find that inner "still small voice." Only after tasting of the Lord and His sweetness, does the spirit long to reject its former preoccupation with worldly affairs and strive for a new integration. This deeper dimension of the inner image (*antara mūrti*) which is the Image after which Adam was made, is, in fact, the image of the Lord. It is discovering this image that the human person finds a true identity. This implies a transformation of the individual ego, its "death" in order that it might live in Him. Through this immersion in a transcendent reality, the small fragmented self experiences a real baptism. This is the most vivid experience in the cave of the heart, where we discover the Real Presence.

This spiritual journey proceeds from Communion to Baptism and Real Presence. Such an inner pilgrimage would be readily accepted by Hindus who have always accepted the freedom of the individual to experience a transforming reality, and have only questioned Baptism when it has seemed to be a mere formality, a social ritual which separates a person from the communion of his mother-culture, resulting in rootless individuals. Whereas for Indians culture is something holy, Christian missionaries in the past have tended to see culture as just secular, and have equated culture

with the profane. By objecting to a Baptism which rejects traditional culture, Indians have, in fact, asserted the holiness of culture, for without some culture, a person loses an important dimension of being human. What we come back to again and again is that by drawing too rigid a line between secular life and spirituality, between culture and faith, between the physical body and the spiritual body, we are in danger of destroying the unity of the authentically human synthesis.

Many of us feel that we are secular pilgrims. How does such a pilgrim see the structured visible church? We speak of the Church itself as a pilgrim Church. In fact, the organized Church seems excessively built-up to be a community of wayfarers vowed to the holy simplicity which has abandoned all possessions (*aparigraha*). The only Church in which I can imagine pilgrim would feel at ease would be like a wayside ashram or hospice, like the place where the pilgrims to Emmaus halted at sunset to share a meal with the risen Lord.

### *The Metaphor of the Body*

Perhaps the most central "metaphor" for all sacred buildings is the metaphor of the body. The temple in ancient thought was nothing other than the Divine Body. This body was thought, like all living bodies, to have its own laws. It had to be fed, and hence the sacrifices, the offerings placed before the sanctuary. It became pregnant—hence it had a womb which was the *Sanctum Sanctorum* (the *Garbha-grha* of the Hindu temple). It is within this context of the holy place as a body that ritual washing also had its place. Eating and purification were often inter-linked in ancient symbolic thought. The *janum* (temple) was separated from the *pro-fanum* (that which lies before the temple) by a sacred tank in which, before entering the body of the Lord, the worshipper was supposed to wash away all impurities.

Jesus seems to have rather distanced himself from the temple worship of his day. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman, when he discussed that water which would quench all thirst, he speaks of a time when temple worship will be replaced by those who worship "in spirit and in truth". Repeatedly, he used the concept of hunger and thirst as metaphors for this quest for truth and righteousness. After rejecting the purificatory obsessions of the Jews, he seems to reflect on a Jewish proverb when talking to the Syro-Phoenician woman who wanted her daughter to be healed, "Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (Mk 7:27). Her quick response that even the dogs pick up the crumbs from beneath the table wins his admiring assent. The bread is for all who hunger. Who are the children, after all? Has anyone got any exclusive rights over that Bread of Life which is meant to sustain all? Who is a son of Israel, and who is a foreigner?

The body is the most secular reality which we have—the most time-bound, corruptible and fragile. And yet this body is also most capable of experiencing strong urges like hunger and thirst, experiencing agony as well as joy. By ignoring the old corporeal metaphor, and making the Church only a thing of brick, stone and mortar, there is the danger that we forget that the real temple is not in the external object, but in the hearts and longings of those who worship. Theocratic societies tended to equate the secular and the profane. It is only now that we slowly discover the sacredness of the secular, seeing that it is the human being that constitutes the real temple, and this human being cannot be cut up into the pure and the impure. Given this intuition, surely our understanding of Baptism will find a new and more profoundly secular meaning—not just an external rite which separates the institutional community of believers from those who are “pagans”, “infidels” or “non-believers”, but rather an inner opening up of the heart to love and to serve.

Jyoti SAHI\*

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\* Mr Jyoti SAHI is the founder and director of the Indian School of Art for Peace set up in an Indian village north of Bangalore: Vishram, Silvepura, Turbanahalli P.O. 560090. In 1976-1978 he had several contributions to the VIDYAJYOTI Journal.

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### Correction

#### Christ the Host

Dear Editor,

In my review of the Durrwell's book, *La Paque du Christ*, (VIDYAJYOTI 1985, pp. 526-7) a printing error gravely misrepresents what I wanted to say regarding the Grelot's excellent article on the Lord's Supper. He insists that Christ, the risen Lord, is present as the Host (and not, as printed, in the Host, p. 527, line 55) and invites the Church to his meal so as to unite the Church with Himself. In fact Grelot underemphasizes the development of the doctrine of transubstantiation. I will be grateful if you could clarify my meaning.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.



# Book Reviews

## Ecumenism and Sacraments

**Baptism and Eucharist. Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration.** Edited by Max THURIAN and Geoffrey WAINWRIGHT. *Geneva/Grand Rapids Exeter, WCC/Eerdmans/Paternoster Press, 1983.* pp ix-258. £ 11.95.

In the Preface the editors spell out the purpose of this valuable book: "...to help theologians and church leaders both to assess the current understanding and practice of Baptism and the Lord's Supper within the confessions and among them and also to agree on what still remains necessary to attain complete consensus."

Within the WCC and between the major churches and the Catholic church the fundamental sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist as well as ministries have been studied in depths for a long period, and a mature convergence of understanding has emerged especially as witnessed in the Lima Document of 1982. The text of the Lima Eucharist is included in this book.

This book is concerned with Baptism (M. Thurian) and the Eucharist (G. Wainwright). In the first part Thurian gives a concise, biblically based general introduction to the meaning of Baptism. This is followed by a collection of texts of modern baptismal liturgies from the major Christian denominations, the united churches, other small Christian groups as well as the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus and an ecumenical baptismal text written by Thurian on the basis of the Lima document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. The study of the texts indicates the wide areas of convergence as well as some diversity in traditions.

The second part concerns the Eucharist. The editor has gathered and arranged in order 36 Eucharistic texts. The first group contains old texts of the Latin,

Eastern Orthodox and Syrian communities with the related second and fourth Eucharistic prayers of the Catholic Church and a common Eucharistic prayer (USA). Another group of texts are so arranged that we can compare the original Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican texts with their modern forms. The texts used today by some other Christian churches are included together with four ecumenical texts, and texts which deeply reflect the culture or life-situation of particular national or groups: the New Order of Mass for India, Zairean, Thai and Philippine texts, and an Australian aboriginal Eucharistic prayer. These texts enable us to study the continuity in liturgical tradition, the influence of the needs of the modern world and the convergence of the great churches' eucharistic theology and practice. Necessary introductions with bibliographical indications are given with most texts.

The aspect of convergence forms the substance of an historical survey of the biblical, liturgical and ecumenical studies which have enabled the churches to reach such a degree of common theological agreement on the Eucharist and renew its celebration. This survey is a mini-course in the present theology of the Eucharist and its evolution. The following aspects are discussed: the sacraments as signs, trans-signification, memorial and sacrifice, the eschatological and ecclesial dimensions, the Eucharist and the world, the Eucharist as Blessing, and the present ecumenical understanding.

The final section of the book consists of extracts from pastoral reflections on the celebration of the Eucharist with special emphasis on the Eucharist and an authentic Christian life. The extracts from Gutierrez and Balasuriya highlight the dimension of justice. The concluding document is the text of the ecumenical Eucharistic liturgy celebrated in Lima at the plenary session of the Faith

and Order Commission in 1982, with comments by its author, M. Thurian.

This book could be profitably read along with the Faith and order document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) and the commentaries published on it by the WCC. Containing liturgical texts with initial introductions where necessary, a fine introduction to the theology of the Eucharist and a selected bibliography, the book is an excellent teaching aid and a practical formation in an ecumenical mode of thought and life.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

*A Call to Discipleship. Baptism and Conversion.* By Godwin R. SINGH (ed.), Delhi, ISPCK for the NCCI, 1985, Pp. vi-217. Rs 51 (in India).

The Protestant churches in India have a tradition of a common theological reflection, both critical and creative, on mission, baptism, the church and related issues. In recent times the National Christian Council of India organised, in 1966, a conference in Nasrapur, Maharashtra, on the mission of the Church in India today (papers and impressions scattered in the *National Christian Council Review*, May-November (1966)). A few years later, in 1971, CISRS organised an important seminar in Bangalore on Baptism in the Indian perspective (cf. *Religion and Society*, March 1972). The book under review presents eight papers discussed at a conference held also in Bangalore in 1982, after the Faith and Order Lima Conference, although only S. Rayan's paper makes a (critical) study of the Lima document. The paper on baptism by a group of theologians from the U.T.C., Bangalore, is impressive in its comprehensiveness: the Bible, Christian history, the Indian scene, come for a careful critical study. Dr G.R. Singh's paper presents the baptismal practices of the Indian churches and on what Indian theologians have said in the past about baptism. Studying the "socio-cultural dimensions" of baptism and conversion, C. Rajamani and C. Lawrence make a sober reflection on the lessons one can derive from the Meenakshipuri and other South Indian incidents, fresh in the minds of the participants at the time of the Seminar.

I was particularly interested in discovering that the CNI liturgy provides an optional prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of water within the baptismal ritual (96): in the context of the "theology of water" implied in many of the religious practices and myths of India, this seems a welcome form of inculturation. The sacraments need to be rooted more firmly than our catechesis usually does into the elementary natural symbolism of the elements which they use to express the mystery of our life in Christ. This is why I prefer the Lutheran Hindi terminology of *jalābhiseka* for baptism to the traditional Catholic term *snāna-samskāra* too reminiscent of "washing".

The expression on p. 97 affirming that the Roman document on Infant baptism recognises a particular situation in India is incorrect: it is not in the style of Roman documents to do that! (The affirmation derives from a personal comment of the present reviewer).

Not all the papers of the conference will appeal to everybody. Some of them need further development and the book could have done with better editing. But as an expression of the progressive Indian theological groping in the traditional arcas of mission, conversion and baptism the book will be of interest to all theologians and to many educated Christians in India. A pity that its rather high price will put it beyond the reach of many private readers! Appendix II contains a report of the results of a research project done by the Gurukul centre in Madras on "Non-Baptized Believers in Christ" in the Madras city. It is interesting, but, to my mind, inconclusive.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

### Spirituality

*One Minute Wisdom.* By Anthony DE MELLO, S.J. Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1985. Pp. xiv-229. Rs 30.

Recently someone described a family meal years ago. One of the family remarked how good God was to give us two ears to hear and two eyes to see. His sister aged 12 incredulously asked "Do you see with both eyes?" "Why? Of course!" "I only see with one!" She had

used only one eye for years and no one had noticed! There was consternation!

Most of us are also blind. Like Tony de Mello's other books, this book helps us to allow the scales fall from our eyes and to see other aspects of reality. This is a book of wisdom sayings set into the a background of short pithy stories and imaginary dialogues. These are some rare stones set into sketches of situations of daily life in which attitudes are uncovered, insights provoked, and light made to fall into dark rooms. The sun rises to dispel the greyness of the dying night, running horses are suddenly brought to a halt, and the "wise man" goes away puzzled.

At sunset or at sunrise, during a conversation, while reading, or looking out the window of a train, there is a flash at times, a moment which is precious. On such occasions we need to pause and wait. This book can also elicit these brief interior movements or insights and again we need to pause and put the book aside to take it up again later, so that we can cherish the small treasure on each page.

The wisdom sayings of the master are gathered in no special order—one saying to a page with an indication of the "subject matter." The sayings reflect the concerns, attitudes, ways of living, ideologies, movements, slogans, psychological illnesses of today. Reading through the book I am aware that much of the wisdom rises from situations in human life, and in a specific way the life of Christians, priests and religious. We could compare some of the sayings with the wisdom sayings of the OT and the teaching of Jesus. The distinctive mark of these sayings of the master would be the emphasis on and awareness of the importance of the psychological dimensions of human life.

The illustrations of Sr Chantal merge into the meditative character of the book. The publisher is to be commended for the quality of the publication. The 5,000 copies of the first edition will surely be exhausted.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Pray with the Bible. Prayer Guide-Lights from the Bible Readings at Mass.** By NEEL QUESSON. Vol. I. Gospels: Advent to Pentecost. Vol II. Gospel: Pentecost to Advent. Bangalore, Theological Publications in India. 1984/85. Pp. 367 and 305. No price given.

These books are translations (by Fr Archambeaud) of *Parole de Dieu pour chaque jour*, a series of 5 volumes of meditations based on the Gospel readings and the first reading for the whole liturgical year. In these two volumes we have daily meditations of 2 pages based on the Gospel readings of the weekdays for the whole year. A supplementary volume will be published soon for the Sunday gospels, with an Index. To use the books the reader needs a Bible or better the week-day lectionary or a daily Mass book.

Each short paragraph of a meditation has a sentence from the day's gospel as its starting point followed by a brief explanation, occasional exegesis of difficult verses, and a series of thoughts and reflections. The book is written to lead to prayer and the shifts back and forth between the 3rd and 2nd person are to help this end. The author has outlined briefly the way to use the books so that they help the reader to pray.

The possible value of the volumes is twofold. They provide biblically based material for daily prayer for priests and sisters. Those who use these helps to prayer will more and more develop a spiritual culture rooted in and nourished by the Bible. The actual value of the volumes depends to a degree on the quality of the interpretation of Scripture.

The author is well acquainted with and influenced by the accepted Catholic attitudes to the Gospels and their interpretation. The understanding of the text is normally of a high quality. At times reflections and thoughts rising from verses go beyond the biblical text, are "pious" reflections and miss the real purpose and depth of the biblical text. This occurs more when the author isolates a verse from its immediate context and role. This is more easily seen in his treatment of parables and in aspects of the narrative sections. The author has a good sense of the particular character

of each gospel. My major question would be the "private" type of spirituality the book could reinforce, the lack of a strong emphasis on the social dimensions of Christian life so imperative in India today, and the possible effects of prolonged use of a series of daily prayer books which come from a non-Indian cultural and religious background.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Theology of Christian Solidarity.** By Jon SOBRINO and Juan HERNANDEZ PICO. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1985. Pp. viii-99. \$ 7.95.

This book contains the translations of two long articles published separately in 1982 on the same theme of *solidarity*. The basis for the reflections was not the Polish trade union movement but the experience by the Central American churches of a tremendous wave of solidarity in their suffering, coming from other churches, specially of Europe and North America. For Sobrino solidarity is the translation for the biblical verb of "bearing with" (the other). A Baptist reviewer thinks that solidarity could very appropriately translate the Pauline notion of "submission". At any rate, solidarity implies giving and receiving. It involves a personal commitment and thus goes well beyond mere "aid". Such a sense of solidarity started an exchange of goods and insights in which the Latin American churches were not just the receivers of men or money, but contributed themselves new insights into Christian faith and new ways of living the Gospel that awakened the spiritual life of the other churches. For "it is a Christian truth that he who gives, receives" (19). Ecumenism can be translated in terms of solidarity specially if it keeps as its chief concern the real truth of the Church, that is, its call to heal the chasm between the poor and the rich. For "inter-confessional solidarity without a preliminary solidarity with the poor of the world is out of touch with reality, anti-Christian, and difficult to achieve in real history" (25). Equally, mission is an expression of solidarity with the same perspective. The pages on solidarity in faith (31 ff) are particularly insightful.

The essays, somewhat verbose, are useful. They give a timely warning about the dangers of fighting for freedom without justice or for justice without freedom (83) and the temptations of misusing the name of solidarity with the poor to keep a control over them or to dominate them so that "projects originally intended to contribute to the forward thrust of the poor in history and to provide a real service to the poor by the Church, end up being changed into 'parallel' undertakings or even beachheads ready to be utilized against the liberative projects of the poor in history" (89).

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Flights of Vjcsory. Vuelos de Victoria.** By Ernesto CARDENAL. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1985. Pp. xxxii-123 \$ 9.95.

The title is appropriate not only because the book contains the latest flights of fancy of the poet-priest of the Nicaraguan revolution, but also because many of its poems touch on the theme of flight: air-flights, bird flights, star views. ...Other themes are light, life, evolution, hope, freedom from fear, the new world, and the Sandinist revolution, which in the poet's vision practically coincides with the object of Christian hope, heaven, the Kingdom, what he belligerently calls communism. The poems could be said to belong to the genre of political mysticism, centered on the poet's love for Nicaragua, "a great tomb of martyrs" (37). This country arose to a new hope on that 19th of July 1979, the day of the Sandinist victory over Somoza (the very first poem refers to the events of that day). Cardenal sings of the beauty of Nicaragua's nature, of its men and women, and their revolution which he sees as God's own work. He gives us glimpses of a unitary vision of the universe, where all hands are one hand, all faces one face, all events lead to one Victory.

The black night of Somoza's regime, when "to be between 15 and 25 years old" was illegal ("they feared them because they were young") (25), forms the backdrop for the themes of insurrection, celebration (of victory), reconstruction and memory-cum-vision. The poetry is

in continuity with the earlier style developed by Cardenal, which he called "exteriorismo". Based on a cumulative description of the external reality as it meets our eyes this style is concrete, impressionistic abounding in proper names, interlaced with memories, full of colour, contrast, paradox, humour and even irreverence. Behind the style there is the author's faith. If the writings seem to lean towards facile optimism, this can be justified in the context of the external pressures and the anti-Sandinist propaganda of which Nicaragua is the object on the part of its neighbour and the mass media it controls.

An interesting aspect is that the poems present the poet-priest ill at ease with the prosaic work of government and his job as a organiser of the cultural revolution. He would much prefer to watch the movements of a street cat than to proceed to a diplomatic reception (60). In the midst of a cabinet meeting discussing the eradication of some particularly nasty mosquito, he can muse, "How curious, how curious. It is love: The cabinet assembled for the love of one's neighbour" (63).

Each of the 41 poems is presented in the Spanish original with a very faithful and competent, if less euphonic, English translation on the opposite page. The 22-page introduction by the editor and translator, Marc Zimmerman, places these poems in the context of Cardenal's life and his poetic history and that of other Central American poets. This is a good book to feel the hopes of the Sandinist phenomenon in the Nicaragua reality.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Our Search for Happiness.** By Ramon NUBIOLA, S.J. *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash* 1985. Pp. (xii) 124. Rs. 12, \$ 3.

I find the title of the book very appealing and relevant because most people are interested in this word, Happiness, or are searching for the reality behind it under some other name. The book is written in a simple style and the examples given, generally taken from real-life situations, bring out the message intended. The progression of the chapters is theological. Man is puzzled with the situation in which he finds himself, and realizes that God is the source and centre of all goodness. This awareness must lead him towards others, to be kind in thought, word and deed.

Every person has his or her own puzzle to solve (Part I), but without realising God's nearness and love (Part II) no one can authentically move towards his or her sister or brother (Part III), and thus grow into an old age filled with happiness, in spite of the difficulties that accompany it (Part IV).

The author has used only one sketch/diagram in his book. I would have liked him to introduce a few more, where possible, because it is these simple sketches that helped me when I made a retreat under him some years ago. Some of the ideas in the book with which I feel uncomfortable are: a) the answer given to the problem of suffering (p. 3); the suggestion that our final reward must be earned (p. 12). On "A Reader's Difficulty" (ch. 5 of part IV—see also ch. 6) I would say that people are certainly influenced in various degrees by the social and political situation in which they live, but I would not like to stress that they are "the victims of...". Let us not be excessively optimistic or pessimistic, but rather realistic. We need to study the situation in which we are, reflect/discern, and act on it. We need a combination of the human and the divine, attempting to respond to life-situations in the way shown by the only perfect man, Jesus Christ.

Conrad FONSECA, S.J.



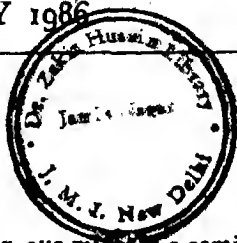
# Vidyajyoti

## JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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### In This Issue:

The presence of the Holy Father in our midst is a reminder to us of the stupendous mission the community has received to be an effective witness of God's Kingdom, revealed in Jesus Christ, in the midst of our multiseccular and multireligious society.

In this issue Fr M. AMALADOSS, well known to our readers, comes back on one of the most difficult theological issues discussed in our pages, as he said he would do in his letter to the Editor published last October. He expands on his theological perspective of the religions of the world as expressions and revelations of the same Mystery of God. At the same time, he analyses the meaning of the Christological affirmations of our faith, and in the light of Jesus Christ sees mission and dialogue as converging movements.

A new contributor to our journal, Ms Caroline MACKENZIE makes a personal reflection on her experience of inculturation in a traditional Hindu milieu and a feminine meditation on the figure of Mary. Thus in her article we hear the voice of the laity and of a woman. The Message of the last Synod to the World, while looking forward to the 1987 Synod on "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World, Twenty Years after Vatican II," reminds us that "every baptised man and woman, according to his or her state in life and in the Church, receives the mission to proclaim the Good News of salvation for man in Jesus Christ. Each is therefore called to exercise his or her particular responsibility." VIDYAJYOTI is happy to be able to relay the voice of our reflective laity to the Church at large. We hope that as the Synod draws near, we shall be able to publish more from them.

The Journal also publishes this month a short account of the Extraordinary Synod, about which the weekly media have already informed our readers, and a commented summary of the Synod's *Relatio*. We also print the text of all the "Suggestions" contained in the document.

# Dialogue and Mission: Conflict or Convergence?

M. AMALADOSS, S.J.

**T**HERE is a widespread feeling today in the Church that its traditional missionary dynamism is growing weaker. This phenomenon is being blamed on the emerging theology of religions on the one hand and, on the other, on the broadening of the focus of the mission effort. Proclamation leading to conversion is seen only as one aspect of evangelization, the other aspects being dialogue, liberation and inculturation.<sup>1</sup> An increasing secularization and dechristianization has made the whole world the field of mission, so that one speaks of the mission to six continents. The other religions are seen in a more positive light as "ways of salvation" calling for inter-religious dialogue.<sup>2</sup> Some theologians have not only moved from Christocentrism to theocentrism, but even propose the possibility of many incarnations.<sup>3</sup> Are we finding facile solutions to the problem of religious pluralism, sacrificing in the process the identity of the Church and of Christ? In this atmosphere the dialectical relationship between mission and dialogue becomes radicalized into an opposition, with the result that a variety of middle positions that try to hold on to both poles of the dialectic tend to get overlooked. I think that mission and dialogue are in a convergent rather than conflictual relationship. I shall try to explain why in the following pages. It is not my intention here to explore elaborately the implications of mission and dialogue taken separately. I shall rather focus on their inter-relationships.

## *A Paradigm Shift?*

Karl Rahner has suggested that with the Second Vatican Council the Church has entered a new stage of awareness and development:

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1. See e.g. Mary MOTTE and Joseph R. LANG (eds), *Mission and Dialogue*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1982, pp. 633-642.

2. J. NEUNER (ed.), *Christian Revelation and World Religions*, London, Burns and Oates, 1967.

3. Cf. Paul KNITTER *In No Other Name?* Maryknoll, Orbis, 1985, p. 191.

from being a European dominated reality into a world Church.<sup>4</sup> He considers this transition as important as the transition of the Church from being a Jewish sect into a Christian community open to the gentile Greco-Latin world. However, it is not a triumphalistic awareness of a giant multi-national corporation with power and influence everywhere, but that of a community-in-diaspora, which is everywhere—even in the so-called Christian countries—a little flock, vigorously witnessing to and proclaiming the Good News.<sup>5</sup> Corresponding to this self-awareness of itself as a world Church is a realization, through growing dialogue with other religions that the universal salvific will of God makes Him present to all men of every time through his Word and his Spirit. Combined with these new perspectives is a new method of theological reflection that does not descend from above, deductively from the truths of faith, but rather starts from below with the experience of the world and, reading the signs of the times, moves on to interpret the perennial tradition in order to make it relevant to the present. Such an exploration of human and social experience needs the help of the social sciences.

I think we are actually living a process that could be called a paradigm shift. In science, a paradigm is a framework of meaning that makes sense of a body of data perceived as a system. New data brought in by new discoveries tend to be interpreted and integrated into the existing framework. Then comes a stage when some incoming data cannot be so integrated. Under this challenge, the framework itself undergoes a transformation. This is a paradigm shift. The Copernican revolution is a well-known example. The theology of evangelization is undergoing a Copernican revolution. Under the impact of a positive experience of other religions, the centre of the framework is shifting from the Church to the Kingdom. This change is making us look in a new way at Christ, at the Church, at salvation and at mission. In the following pages let us first look at the various elements of the paradigm. We would then be able to look at the whole. We shall then draw appropriate conclusions for reflection and action.

#### *A Positive View of Other Religions*

The Second Vatican Council declared in its Constitution on the Church:

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4. K. RAHNER, "Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council", *Theological Investigations XX*, New York, Crossroad, 1981, pp. 77-89.

5. Cf. K. RAHNER, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, London, SPCK, 1974.



Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.<sup>6</sup>

This text reaffirms traditional doctrine: It might, however, seem to limit itself to the interior, personal relationship between God and an individual in the secrecy of his conscience. This perspective is further deepened in a trinitarian context, stressing the common vocation of all men to salvation, by the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

Since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with his paschal mystery.<sup>7</sup>

The document on the Missions speaks of "those multiple endeavours, including religious ones, by which men search for God", though they "need to be enlightened and purified."<sup>8</sup> The Declaration on Other Religions talks of "ways", consisting of "teachings, rules of life and sacred ceremonies." It develops further the theme of a common vocation. All peoples make up a single community, which has God as its origin and goal. "His providence, His manifestations of goodness, and His saving designs extend to all men (cf. Wis 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom 2:6-7; 1 Tim 2:4)." Christians, therefore, are exhorted, through dialogue and collaboration and in witness of Christian faith and life, to "acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture."<sup>9</sup>

Continuing this tradition and talking from an experience of the great religious traditions of Asia, the Asian Bishops affirm:

We accept them as significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation. In them we recognize and respect profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values. Over many centuries they have been the treasury of the religious experience of our ancestors, from which our contemporaries do not cease to draw light and strength. They have been and

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6. *Lumen Gentium*, 16.

7. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22. Cf. also JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 14; *Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions* (Rome, 1984), 22.

8. *Ad Gentes*, 3.

9. *Nostra Aetate*, 2.

continue to be the authentic expression of the noblest longings of their hearts, and the home of their contemplation and prayer. They have helped to give shape to the histories and cultures of our nations. How then can we not give them reverence and honour? And how can we not acknowledge that God has drawn our peoples to Himself through them?<sup>10</sup>

In systematising these insights theologians have explained that given God's universal salvific will on the one hand, and the socio-historical nature of the human person, on the other, the salvific dialogue between them takes place not merely in the interiority of conscience but through the teachings, rules of life and sacred ceremonies that constitute religion.<sup>11</sup> We can therefore say that the followers of other religions attain to salvation not in spite of them, but in and through them, though it is always God who saves. Religions are therefore "ways of salvation". Some have called the Church an extraordinary way as opposed to other ordinary ways. We shall discuss this difference later. For the moment let us stay with the idea—or rather the experience in dialogue—of many ways to salvation: not many salvations, but many ways of participating in the one salvation from the Father through Christ in the Spirit.

### *The Pluralism of Religions*

As soon as one speaks of many ways to salvation one is accused of relativism. Is it not like saying: 'All religions are the same', 'All religions are true', 'All religions lead to God as all rivers lead to the sea'? The Document on Religious Freedom of the Second Vatican Council states very clearly:

The highest norm of human life is the divine law—eternal, objective, and universal—whereby God orders, directs and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law. . . Hence every man has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious. . . Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication, and dia-

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10. Statement of the Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, Taipei, 1974: "Evangelization in Modern Day Asia," 14-15. Text in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. I, Manila, IMC Publications, 1984, p. 30. See also *Redemptor Hominis*, 6 and 12: "It is the question of respecting everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit, which 'blows where it wills'."

11. K. RAHNER, "Christianity and Non-Christian Religions", *Theological Investigations V*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966, pp. 115-134.

logue. . . In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience faithfully. . . Of its very nature, the exercise of religion consists before all else in those internal, voluntary, and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. . . However, the social nature of man itself requires that he should give external expression to his internal acts of religion: that he should participate with others in matters religious; that he should profess his religion in community.<sup>12</sup>

In matters of religion and faith, the guidance of conscience is decisive. It is not religions that give salvation; they are only ways. It is God who offers freely salvation to man who responds also in freedom. In this covenantal relationship, mediated by religion, all men are indeed equal. It is not relativism to say: God calls me to himself through the Church, but He seems to be calling my brother through another religion. My friend is not only free, but obliged to respond to God's call along the way in which he feels God is directing him. But it is relativism if I say that it is a matter of indifference to me (or to another person) whether I am a Christian, a Hindu or a Muslim, because all ways lead to God. For each person only that way leads to God which he indicates in his own providential manner. It is a matter of experience, unless we are ready to accuse the majority of humanity of insincerity, that God leads people to himself in various ways in a mysterious manner known only to himself. It is true therefore that all rivers lead to the sea: but not for the same person. The world is not a super-market of religions where one can shop around for the best one. Religion is a matter of God's call: a vocation. Conversion to another religion is only justifiable when one hears the call of God. Some might find this legitimacy conferred on other religions difficult to accept. Yet if God wants to save all men and the majority of them, both at any given time and in history taken as a whole, live and die as members of other religions, to consider these illegitimate is equivalent to saying that God's will is ineffective, if we accept that God respects the human, social and historical character of men. On the other hand, they are only ways. What is important is that they facilitate the encounter of God and man.

Could one compare the different ways—religions—objectively in themselves? This could be an interesting pastime for scholars of the History of Religions. But it is irrelevant to our purpose here. (Somehow we do not seem capable of seeing two things without

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12. *Dignitatis Humanae*, 3.

comparing them and putting them in a sort of hierarchical order. Is virginity superior to marriage? For whom? If God has called a person to the married state, it is obviously the best state of life for him or her.) There may be other levels—structural, functional and symbolical, rooted in history and culture—in which such comparisons are meaningful: but not at the basic religious level of divine call and human response.

For persons who are accustomed to abstract ideas of "truth" perceived "objectively", such a point of view may be upsetting. Without outlining a whole epistemology, I shall make just two observations. First of all, religious truth is symbolic.<sup>13</sup> Symbol indicates a mediation, a sacramentality. "Symbol" is not opposed to real. God relates to us and we to God in and through symbols, because man experiences God in "theophanies" that give Him a "name" and a "form" in the context of a history, a tradition, a culture. It is in and through some such symbol that God is experienced and not somehow in himself. (One could discuss whether mystical experience manages to do away with all symbols.) Secondly, this experience of God in and through symbols is always an act of faith. Once again we should not oppose faith and truth. The truth of revelation is not one that can be scientifically demonstrated. One needs the eyes of faith to perceive it. One cannot talk about it objectively, independent of the perspective of faith. Every faith perspective is under the constant judgement of the Absolute which is mediated to it through the symbol. Every faith can judge everything else from its point of view. But it cannot claim to do so "objectively", that is to say, in a way acceptable to some one else who does not share that faith. One could always be strongly positive about one's own faith. But one should be very careful in being negative about someone else's faith. When faith meets faith, objectivist language is no longer useful: only dialogue remains meaningful. I do not think that a world theology transcending all religions can be anything more than a rational abstraction, though a convergent sharing of faith remains possible. The denial of the possibility of an objective language does not deny the objectivity of the Reality spoken of.

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13. Cf. M. AMALADOSS, "Symbol and Mystery", *Journal of Dharma* 2 (1977) pp. 382-396.

### *The Church and Other Religions*

What is the self-awareness of the Church in the midst of the religions? I think we can say that after the Second Vatican Council no one would think of the Church and other religions in terms of presence/absence of salvation or light/darkness. There would however be some who would still think in terms of divine/human, supernatural/natural. Apart from the fact that such dichotomies are no longer current in theology today, such an attitude is untenable after the repeated affirmations of God's universal salvific will and of a common divine plan for the world. Terms like implicit/explicit, partial/full are more common today. One sees the history of salvation as a straight line that moves from the Cosmic to the Mosaic and the Christian covenants. The process is one of explicitation and fulfilment. While we cannot deny the special significance of the short period of history between Moses and Jesus, it would not be fair to narrow down salvation history to that short time. A special call finds its meaning only in relation to the whole. So we cannot understand the significance of this brief period of history without setting it back in the context of the universal history of humankind, which is also a salvation history, because God has willed and planned to save all.<sup>14</sup>

I think the Copernican revolution I spoke of in the beginning is to be located just here. Do we think of salvation as the reality of the new covenant slowly reaching out into a world that is outside or do we see salvation present and active universally—universal meaning both "everywhere" and "at all times"—in the context of which we seek to understand the significance of the new covenant and the special role of the Church?

The universal salvific will does not merely reach out to individuals in and through their respective religions. It also leads the whole universe to a unity—a communion—in which "God will rule completely over all" (1 Cor 15:28). It is this vision of history that

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14. See the strong statement of K. RAHNER: "Christian faith is aware of a universal history of salvation, common to all mankind, existing from the very outset, always effective, universally present as the most radical element of the manifestation. The universalism of the one salvific will of God in regard to all mankind, which establishes the final unity of mankind, is the sustaining ground of all particular history of salvation and religion." "Unity of the Church—Unity of Mankind". *Theological Investigations XX*, pp. 160-161.

calls for the collaboration, not only of all religions, but even of all men of good will. What, then, is the special role of the Church in this history of salvation in relation to the other religions? The Document on the Church speaks of it as a kind of sacrament: "By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind."<sup>15</sup> I think that this idea of "sacrament" offers us a good point for reflection. One could immediately ask two questions: What is a sacrament? Why do we need a sacrament when we have the reality (salvation)? I would like to look for an answer to these questions by analysing one of the sacraments.

One often hears an analogous question: "If one's sins are forgiven through sincere repentance, why go to confession?" What is basic in the process of salvation is the divine-human encounter. While the sacraments celebrate such encounters, especially in relation to the paschal mystery, they have no monopoly of such encounters. If a sinner sincerely turns to God, his sins are forgiven. The rite of confession becomes meaningful only as a communal symbolic celebration of the encounter. If the encounter is not there, the rite itself is only an empty shell. Since man is a corporal and social being, the ritual may celebrate, facilitate, and enrich the encounter. Both the encounter and its symbolic celebration may be found in different forms in other religions. The sacrament of reconciliation, however, as a celebration of the Church shares in the structural aspect of the Church, which in turn is linked to the paschal mystery. This is an awareness that when the Church as a community is present and active in a sacramental celebration, God is present and active there. This is not magical, nor does it dispense with the basic divine-human encounter. But it links it structurally and through tradition to the paschal mystery and thus provides an assurance. Man is still free to respond or not. But God has committed himself irrevocably through the institution of the Church and through giving it the power to bind and to loose, etc. This irrevocable commitment is symbolically evoked in the sacrament. But this irrevocableness itself extends to all the acts of God in history, by reason of the once-for-all paschal mystery.

The Church therefore is a sacrament that makes present, sensibly

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15. *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

(i.e., in a way accessible to the senses) and through celebration, a basic divine-human encounter. It is related to the paschal mystery of Christ because the Church that celebrates is a community that is aware of being founded by Christ.

What are the implications of considering the Church a sacrament of salvation? It makes present a mystery that transcends it—a mystery that reaches out further, not being limited to the sacrament. It is ordained to the ever fuller realization of the mystery. On the one hand, it is a symbolic realization: this makes it a witnessing community. On the other hand, it is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, though it is committed to strive for the ever fuller realization of the mystery. It is aware that the mystery is present and active in the world outside its visible structure as a community, though it may not know how. The final criteria to judge the presence of the mystery, whether in or outside the Church, are really the "fruits" of the Spirit or the values of the Kingdom, like freedom, fellowship, justice, love, service, etc. But our main point here is that by considering itself a kind of sacrament the Church is not simply identifying itself with the Kingdom, which is seen as a wider reality. The term "sacrament" while affirming a real relation, also indicates a limitation, a non-exclusivity.

I think one real problem in this whole discussion is the extension of meaning that we give to the term "Church". Sometimes we mean by "Church" the visible hierarchical community with the structure of sacraments and creeds, with clear boundaries marked by Baptism. At other times we mean by "Church" the Mystical Body of Christ, co-extensive with the Kingdom, made up of all the saved, partly visible and partly invisible.<sup>16</sup> To complicate matters, one easily moves from one to the other meaning. When I speak of the Church in the first sense I know what I am talking about: it is a community that has a history, a tradition, a socio-cultural identity. When I speak of the Church in the second sense I tend to get lost in the mystery. This usage can be a source of confusion in two ways. First of all, one tends to identify the Church-community with the Church-mystery. While the second includes the first, the first does not include the second, though it is related to it. So I could attribute aspects to the second that I would not attribute to the first. For the

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16. *Ibid.* 8.

Church-community, it is legitimate to be aware of its roots in the mystery; but it is presumptuous on its part to identify itself with the mystery and to make claims based on such identification. Secondly, when the Church is face to face with other religions in which it also recognizes the action of God, a simple identification between the Church-community and the Church-mystery becomes really problematic. Within the context of the Church-community one is certainly entitled to explore its depths in mystery. But when one begins speaking of the relationship of the Church-community with the world, with other religions, with cultures, etc., it would help very much if one can be precise in the use of terms. For instance, in the context of inter-religious dialogue, inculturation, mission, etc., it would help to speak normally of the Church-community, aware of its historical and cultural limitedness as a pilgrim Church, specifying therefore the mysteric aspects when one evokes them, being conscious even then that its relationship with the mystery is special, but not exclusive. The other religions too have the same mystery as their depth. On the one hand, any simplification of this complex reality will cause confusion in expression. On the other hand, once other religions are recognized as ways of salvation in the plan of God, one can justifiably talk of the Church also as one among other religions, engaging in dialogue, as ready to receive as to give.

The evocation of an analogous situation in the field of ecumenism may be helpful. The Second Vatican Council recognized for the first time separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities,<sup>17</sup> and, at the same time, affirmed that the one Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church.<sup>18</sup> Some would say that once other Churches are accepted as Churches the word "subsists" indicates a special link—to be explored and specified—but not an identity. There are, however, others who think that "subsists" really means "is" and who therefore tend to look on every Christian as an "anonymous Catholic". Here also we have a similar tension. It is not merely a difference in terminology. It is a difference in awareness, world-view, approaches and attitudes. Even Rahner's celebrated phrase "anonymous Christians" is ambiguous from this point of view and unacceptable, since it can be interpreted to mean an implicit relationship, not only to Christ, but also to Christianity.

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17. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2.

18. *Lumen Gentium*, 8.



The limitations of the Church-community can also be perceived from another point of view. As pilgrim, it gives an imperfect and inadequate response to God's call. The fullness to which it is called is in the future. The Christ-event is certainly God's decisive word. In relation to the Mosaic covenant that preceded it as a preparation, it is the final word. But for the world it is only the beginning of the last times. Following Scripture one could take the analogy of a relationship of love between a man and a woman. They fall in love and a period of courtship follows. At a certain stage there is a definitive commitment in marriage. This is the end of one process, but the beginning of another. In the course of the married life the love grows, finds fruitful expression, ripens. In the ongoing dialogue of love between God and man, God's offer and man's response reach a high point in Jesus, in the unique manner of a God-man.<sup>19</sup> Jesus is the definitive "yes" of both God and Man. But this central definitive act is significant only in relation to the whole drama of love that precedes and follows it. The Jewish Christians would have liked to see Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament and stop there. But St Paul opened the doors of Christianity to the Greco-Roman world, which saw also in Greek philosophy a "pedagogue". After 2000 years the Church seems to stand hesitantly at another stage of openness to the whole world, moving towards a world Church. Mission is meaningful only because it is a move towards a fulness in the future. The Church, as it is, is a historically and culturally limited realization of the Good News—not to speak of its other more human limitations. Moving out of this limited sphere it does not proclaim itself, but the Good News. It is Jesus that has to incarnate himself anew in the various cultures of the world and thus lead the world to its fulness. The Church, as the bearer in history of the Good News and its partial realization, has a role of witness and messenger facilitating the divine-human encounter. In Latin theology, in the context of a juridical point of view centered on Christ, the Church may tend to consider itself as a kind of mediator between God and man. With the renewed affirmation of Christ as the only mediator in the context of Catholic-Protestant dialogue<sup>20</sup> and with the increasing recognition of the

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19. My Christology owes much to K. Rahner. For a brief, but comprehensive exposition of his positions, see his *Foundations of Christian Faith*, New York, Seabury, 1978, pp. 176-320.

20. Cf., e.g., the questions: How to understand the Eucharist as sacrificial in the context of the once-for-all character of Christ's sacrifice on the cross? What is the Church's "priestly" role?

role of the Spirit in the divine economy in the context of Catholic-Orthodox dialogue,<sup>21</sup> there is a more realistic view of the Church today.

### *The Uniqueness of Christ*

To say that the fulness is in the future may still upset some. Is not Christ our fulness? Do we not have everything with Christ? Is he not the unique saviour? Has he not saved all by dying for all? So we come to the Christological problem.<sup>22</sup>

We profess our faith: "Christ died for all". What is the meaning of this statement? There is a spectrum of theological opinions varying from the purely juridical to the organic. Some would say that Christ has made satisfaction for all. The graces he had amassed by his infinite sacrifice are given to all who sincerely repent. The other extreme would be that Christ has saved the whole of humanity by the very act of uniting himself to it; this happens already at the incarnation. Some would speak of a corporate personality: Christ does not die and rise again instead of us, but all of us die and rise with him. Some others would stress the risen Christ: in virtue of his passion and death Christ is now established with power before the throne of God as Lord and Saviour. K. Rahner proposes the theory of real-symbol causality: it is real because it is a definitive commitment that unites both the yes's of God and Man in one person; it is of universal significance because it expresses both God's will to save all men and Jesus' solidarity with every man; it is symbolic, because it is a prototype of every divine-human encounter.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the theory we prefer, we have to safeguard a certain number of things: that the freedom and historicity of every person's response is respected; that this possibility of response is available to people not only after Jesus but also before him; that the possibility is not tied to an explicit profession of faith in Jesus in the Church.

21. Cf. the whole question of the performative formulae of the Latin tradition with the priest speaking "*in persona Christi*" and the declarative formulae of the Greek tradition.

22. Christology and Ecclesiology are obviously related. The relation between the Church-community and Church-mystery is compared to the relation between the two natures in Christ by *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

23. Cf. "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation", *Theological Investigations* XVI, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979, especially, pp. 212-216.

We are faced here with an event in history that has a transcendent significance. Those who wish to point to the centrality of Jesus and the Church in a narrow manner harp on the historical aspect of the matter and speak of the scandal of particularity. Yet it would seem to me that only in so far as we liberate the mystery from its historical particularity, without severing the link, can we realise its universal significance. As a matter of record, in the New Testament the progressive realization of the universal significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus is accompanied by the realization of the universal outreach of his personality as the cosmic Christ of St Paul and the Logos of St John.

It is traditional to speak of two approaches in Christology: from above and from below. Traditional Christology was from above and can become easily monophysite in tone, if not in intention. One speaks of Jesus as God and Saviour and attributes to him what we should normally attribute to God Three-in-One. We know that the Father is the Origin, that the Spirit is the cosmic and active divine power and that the Son has a cosmic role as Word, which at a particular time in history becomes flesh in Jesus. Jesus is heir to a particular religious tradition, to a particular culture and to a particular historical situation. He grew up like other men, was ignorant and tempted, sacrificed his life for the others and was raised up by God on the third day. He sent his Spirit on his disciples promising that the Spirit would lead them into all truth. Meditating on and living this experience, the Church progressively discovers the universal and divine dimension of his personality. But in doing this Paul and John do not simply attribute every thing to the historical Jesus but evoke the cosmic Christ and the Logos. Later theological systematization emphasized not only the unity of person, but also the distinction of natures. Yet popular piety and popular theology have always been tempted to consider Jesus simply as God, neglecting, on the one hand, his humanity and, on the other, the trinitarian aspects of the mystery. Professional theologians made this easy by proposing the theory of "inter-communication of attributes between the two natures of Christ based on the unity of person" (*communicatio idiomatum*). Thus one could proclaim "God died on the cross". Yet if we wish to be accurate we will have to say: "The Son died in his human nature." Without such precision, in a Christology from above one could easily speak a monophysite language. K. Rahner remarks:

When we say, that Peter is a man, the statement expresses a real identification in the content of the subject and the predicate nouns. But the meaning of

"is" in statements involving an interchange of predicates in Christology is not based on such a real identification. It is based rather on a unique, otherwise unknown and deeply mysterious unity between realities which are really different and which are at an infinite distance from each other. For in and according to the humanity which we see when we say "Jesus", Jesus "is" not God, and in and according to his divinity God "is" not man in the sense of a real identification. The Chalcedonian *adiaretos* (unseparated) which this "is" intends to express (DS 302) expresses it in such a way that the *asynchytos* (unmixed) of the same formula does not come to expression. Consequently, the statement is always in danger of being understood in a "monophysite" sense, that is, as a formula which simply identifies the subject and predicate.<sup>24</sup>

Today with a Christology from below there may be a danger of reducing Christ to one among the prophets. But, while being aware of this danger, we still have to protest against the abuse of the theory of "*communicatio idiomatum*". Wilhelm Thusing says with reference to this:

The *communicatio idiomatum* can have the function of safeguarding faith in the unique aspect of Jesus as the absolute bringer of salvation and precisely for this reason it may not be suitable for all generations of Christians, because this way of expressing Jesus' "divinity" has no structural basis in the New Testament. The doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* was developed in a particular spiritual climate or context, in which the classical Christology with its ontic categories was current. Before looking for a basis for the communication of properties in the New Testament, then, the protological statements that are a pre-condition for this doctrine should be examined, their New Testament meaning should be checked and it should be established whether they are historically conditioned. It is, then, only in this particular spiritual context that the doctrine of the communication of properties could have been a legitimate and possibly necessary safeguard for faith in Jesus. Outside this spiritual climate, the only one in which this doctrine is intelligible, it can only lead to a monophysitic misunderstanding. It is also undoubtedly misleading for anyone who is not able to follow this way of thinking easily.<sup>25</sup>

I submit that we are not only in a new climate of thought today, but also before a new situation, namely, the realization of the positive value of other religions, that demands from us not only a careful use of traditional language, but a new language.

It is not my aim here to develop a Christology. But I think we can say that we can speak of Jesus—the human nature of the Son—as limited historically and culturally and talk of his absoluteness,

24. See K. RAHNER, *Foundations*, p. 290.

25. See Wilhelm THUSING in Wilhelm THUSING and K. RAHNER, *A New Christology*, London, Burns and Oates, 1980, p. 180.

uniqueness and universality with the proper nuances that his complex personality demands—to the extent that we can understand the mystery. One often finds this humility and caution lacking. Speaking of the presence of Christ in other religions, K. Rahner suggested that he is present there through the Spirit.<sup>26</sup> Criticising Rahner's talk of "anonymous Christianity" R.J. Schreiter refuses even the term "cosmic Christ" and prefers to talk in terms of the Word and Wisdom according to the sapiential tradition.<sup>27</sup> Even the Scholastics reflecting on the re-enactment of the paschal mystery in the Eucharist spoke of the power of the risen Christ. The attempts of Odo Casel to introduce the idea of a mystery shorn of historical circumstances has not found much favour. This is just to indicate that it is not enough to say that Christ is present. When we ask "how?" the different nuances have to be taken into account. The word became flesh. Jesus was a man like us in all things except sin. Even if he was raised up on the third day, what he said and did and the tradition he left behind him in the Church is historically and culturally limited. It does point to the mystery. But by that very fact it does not transcend the historical and cultural limitations—no more than Jesus ceased to be real human being with all the limitations that it implied while being united to the word. That is the *kenosis*. The resurrection does not do away with this historical limitedness of his earthly life. He may be the universal man in virtue of his resurrection. But in historical and cultural terms this is a universality that has to be achieved, not given. This is the meaning of the contemporary talk of inculturation as a new incarnation of Christ in every culture. This implicitly accepts that the first incarnation was culturally limited. When Paul spoke of the *pleroma* of Christ he spoke of something eschatological, i.e., a process that has started, but which will be achieved only on the last day. Any serious thought of the salvation of people who lived before the passion and death of Christ would also rethink the universal significance, not of the event, but of its historicity.

A Christology from below, on the other hand, may be tempted to reduce Jesus Christ to one among the prophets. These people tend to emphasize the "revelation" aspect of Jesus to the neglect of the saving event of his death and resurrection. If we take this event

26. K. RAHNER, *Foundations*, pp. 316-318.

27. R.J. SCHREITER, "The Anonymous Christian and Christology" *Missiology* VI (1978), pp. 29-52.

seriously, then either we believe it is a divine-human event of a unique kind and then it has a universal significance or we see it as a limited human event and then it has only an exemplary significance. While I am all for moving away from ecclesio-centrism, to oppose theo-centrism to Christo-centrism is to misunderstand our faith both in the Trinity and in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is then no longer an incarnation, an once-for-all event on which our whole sacramental system is based; he becomes only an avatar, a manifestation, like which there can be many. If God's commitment is not definite and irrevocable in Jesus Christ, then I do not see that Jesus is more meaningful to me than Moses or Isaiah. I do not see either how one can profess faith in "Christ who died for all" and envisage the possibility of a plurality of incarnations. If faith in the Trinity involves the belief that where the Father is the Word also is present and active, how can one oppose the Word made flesh to the Father? So I do not think that one can talk of a theo-centrism that would be opposed to Christo-centrism.<sup>28</sup> However, in the light of my thoughts above, I would distinguish between Christo-centrism and Jesus-centrism (taking Jesus as referring only to the human nature of the Son). On the other hand, just as Rahner says<sup>29</sup> that God, though immutable in himself, can change and suffer in the other, namely, the human nature, Jesus; similarly we can say that Jesus becomes universal saviour, not in himself, but in the Other, namely, the divine nature, the Word, to which he is hypostatically united.

Just as we should not separate the two natures in Christ, we should not confuse them either. Such an approach will make it easier to confess, on the one hand, the universal salvific will of God as realised sacramentally in the paschal mystery of Christ reaching out to all men; and, on the other hand, the humanity of Jesus and the Church that follows him, linked to the mystery yet historically and culturally limited, subject to the historical process and oriented in a special manner to the fulness, not already given, except as the first fruits, but to be achieved, not only in and by itself but by the whole

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28. This is my objection to the tendency represented by Paul Knitter and to his own conclusion. See *op. cit.* in note 3 above. I am open to the idea that traditional formulae like that of Chalcedon need revision and improvement. But I feel that too narrow a focus on the Christological problem is not helpful.

29. "If we face squarely and uncompromisingly the fact of the Incarnation which our faith in the fundamental dogma of Christianity testifies to, then we have to say plainly: God can become something. He who is not subject to change in himself can himself be subject to change in something else." K. RAHNER, *Foundations*, p. 220.

of humanity in free response to God present and active, and not always through the Church. The fulness which is eschatological need not take the form of the Church either, in the sense that it is seen merely as Church extension. While we have an assurance about the structure of this plan of God for the world, the concrete processes will have to be discerned in history. In so far as revelation means the manifestation of a global plan of God for the world, it is over. He has said the definitive word in Jesus Christ. But the history of salvation continues and will continue till the time when God will be all in all.

### *A New Paradigm*

The new paradigm, that has already been evoked a number of times earlier, could be outlined in three points. God's universal saving will is present and active everywhere through various ways. It is a plan progressively realised in history. It leads to the unification of all things till God is all in all. The three high points that structure the process and therefore have a special universal significance are creation, the paschal mystery and the final fulfilment. In this historical process the paschal mystery is a definitive moment of irrevocable commitment in which God's free offer and man's free acceptance of divine self-communication meet in a single act—a single person. The Church is a continuing sacramental (symbolic) representation of this definitive divine-human encounter, called by its very being to witness to and to promote the plan of God—the mystery—which it does not identify with itself. The Church has no exclusive claims on the mystery, except that of being its witness and servant, both in life and proclamation. It does not offer easier or fuller salvation. God alone is saviour present and active in the world in ways often unknown to us. Because of the universal salvific will of God and the socio-historical character of the human person, the salvific divine-human encounter is also taking place through other religions and their symbolic structures: scriptures, codes of conduct and rituals. Though we believe that they, too, are related to the paschal mystery in ways unknown to us, they are not direct symbolic re-presentations of its historic realization as the Church is. In the context of the plan of God, common to the whole of human race, the Church is called not only to witness and to proclaim but also to collaborate, humble and respectful of the divine mystery that is operative in the world. While we have the assurance that the mystery

of unification of all things in God would succeed because it is God's own effective will, and while we are sure of our own call to witness to and proclaim it to the whole world, we are ignorant of the concrete ways in which the mystery of God is leading all things to their fulfilment. We have no grounds to believe that the Church-community is the only form, or even the only instrument, of this fulfilment. Human sin, i.e., man's refusal to cooperate with God, not to speak of personal and historico-cultural limitations and conditioning, is a fact at all times and everywhere, not excluding the "pilgrim Church".

### *A Local Church*

Let us now come back to the Church in Asia. Though my main concern here is to clarify the relationship between mission and dialogue, I cannot do this without some reference to the total picture. I shall refrain from elaborations referring the reader elsewhere for that purpose. The first plenary assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences said: "The primary focus of our tasks of evangelizing at this time in our history is the building up of a truly local Church." It describes further the local Church as a "Church incarnate in a people, a Church indigenous and inculturated."<sup>30</sup> Let me make just three points. First of all, the Church in Asia would be considered by many Asians, including Christians, as foreign, not in membership, but in many other ways, which I need not go into here. Secondly, if the Churches in Asia have to be inculturated they have to undergo a baptism—a dying and a rising—at the hand of Asian cultures and religions as Jesus was baptized by John, who represented the Jewish tradition.<sup>31</sup> Such inculturation is not merely a means for an adapted proclamation of the Good News in a new culture. It is the very being of the Church in the new culture. It is in this way that concretely and historically the Church becomes universal. Thirdly, an authentic inculturation also challenges and transforms the culture. The Church in India, for example, must have challenged the caste system. A deeply ingrained social structure like that is not easily changeable. But unless the Church seriously engages in the process of changing it, at least within itself, its power as a witness to the Gospel is, to that extent, reduced. Is not a certain spirit of uncrit-

30. Cf. *op. cit.*, in note 10 above, nn. 9 and 12.

31. See Aloysius PIERIS, "Mission in the Local Church in Relation to the Non-Semitic Religions of Asia", M. MOTTE and J.R. LANG (eds), *op. cit.*, (note 1), pp. 436-438.



ical accommodation with current social realities indicative of an one-sidedly "spiritual" view of mission as the saving of "souls"? The Mission Congress in Manila (1978), following Bishop Patrick D'Souza of India, asked whether, in an area where Baptism meant alienation from the socio-cultural community, one could think of leading people to the Baptism of desire without actually baptizing them. I think it is a wrong question to ask. The obvious thing to do is to inculturate that community, so that people who become members of it do not feel alienated from the socio-cultural milieu. If the alienation is due to certain types of discrimination, then the community is actually called to witness to its convictions bravely: baptism is not an opportunity, but a challenge. If both these possibilities are not feasible, then I think that it is better to leave those people alone. If we seriously believe in the socio-cultural character of religion, bringing people to the Christian faith and then asking them to remain in their own religious milieu would be to ask them to live in a situation of religious ambiguity that would be intolerable. This is a radical relativization of religions, including Christianity.<sup>32</sup>

### *Integral Evangelization*

Pope Paul VI said in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new."<sup>33</sup> The Synod of Bishops in 1971 said: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel."<sup>34</sup> The Asian Bishops see evangelization, in the context of Asia, as a threefold dialogue of the Gospel with the cultures, the religions and the poor.<sup>35</sup> It would be wrong then to take a narrow view of evangelization as mere proclamation leading to baptism and, what is worse, to look upon other types of activity only as means or first steps to proclamation.

The primary task of evangelization is the advancement of the

32. Patrick D'Souza "Church and Mission in Relation to the Kingdom of God especially in a Third World Context", *Towards a New Age in Mission II*, Manila, IMC Publications, 1981, pp. 42-43. The report of the Theological Workshop can be found in *For All the Peoples of Asia*, (note 10), p. 224.

33. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 19.

34. *Justice in the World*, Introduction.

35. See C.G. AREVALO "Further Reflections on Mission Today in the Asian Context", *Towards a New Age of Mission II* (note 32), pp. 130-153.

mystery of God's plan for the world—the promotion of the Kingdom. The building up of a local witnessing community is certainly an element in this task; but not an exclusive element. The kind of activity that we actually have in a given place would depend on the concrete circumstances, needs and possibilities.<sup>36</sup> We have to read the signs of the times and discern the Lord's call in a given situation, rather than go with an abstract list of priorities. The signs of the times include, for instance, the urgency of a particular need like poverty, oppression, inter-religious strife, etc., or the readiness of a given group of people to listen to the Good News.

In the multi-religious societies of Asia the task of promoting common human and evangelical values calls us to collaborate with the members of other religions towards providing a common religious and moral foundation to our developing societies. Speaking to Muslim and Hindu representatives in Nairobi, John Paul II said (Aug. 1985):

The close bonds linking our respective religions—our worship of God and the spiritual values we hold in esteem—motivate us to become fraternal allies in the service to the human family . . . We are all children of God, members of the great family of man. And our religions have a special role to fulfil in curbing these evils and in forging bonds of trust and fellowship. God's will is that those who worship him, even if not united in the same worship, would nevertheless be united in brotherhood and in common service for the good of all.<sup>37</sup>

Whatever may be their absolute faith positions, the different religions can and do find a common perspective in the area of human and religious values. Differences in their historico-cultural roots also make their approaches complementary towards the promotion of integral humanism. An awareness of the Church's own limitations

36. JOHN PAUL II, "In this ecclesial activity it is also necessary to avoid exclusivism and dichotomies. Authentic dialogue becomes witness and true evangelization is accomplished by respecting and listening to one another. Even though 'there is a time for everything' (cf. Eccl 3:1-8), prudence and discernment will teach us what is appropriate in each particular situation: collaboration, witness, listening, or exchange of values." *Speech to the Plenary Assembly of the Secretariat for Non-Christians*, No. 5. See *doc. cit.* in note 7.

37. Nairobi, August 1985. Also: "In consistency with one's own faith, it is also possible to enrich one another through comparing spiritual experiences and sharing forms of prayer as ways of meeting with God." *Speech* cited in note 36, n. 4. Cf. also n. 2: "No one can fail to see the importance and the need which interreligious dialogue assumes for all religions and all believers, called today more than ever to collaborate so that every person can reach his transcendent goal and realize his authentic growth and to help cultures preserve their own religious and spiritual values in the presence of rapid social changes."

in standing up for man in the past and of the contemporary record of countries which Asians identify as Christians would help us to remain humble.

### *Why Proclamation?*

If other religions too are ways of salvation, why proclaim the Gospel and seek to baptize people? The need of other people for salvation motivated missionaries in former times. We do not today share their anxiety. Should that anxiety be an essential element in our enthusiasm in proclaiming the Good News? The motivation to proclaim the Good News is a combination of an internal urge and a call. I have discovered and experienced the Good News and the joy of this experience drives me to share it with others. This internal drive is confirmed and strengthened by the call of Christ to go out into the whole world and be witness to the Good News. I also feel the urge to proclaim the Good News because I am convinced that it has something essential and specific to contribute, according to the plan of God, to the growth of the new humanity. The Cross and the Resurrection, the new commandment, the commitment to a new humanity to be progressively built up in history, are perspectives that give a new kind of meaning to human experience. Thirdly, the Good News can hardly play its role effectively in the world unless it is visibly and socially present in culture as local Church, indigenous and inculturated. To build up such a witnessing Church is also a task of mission.

The desire for baptism is a call of the Spirit, of whom I am only a witness and a messenger. In particular socio-historical circumstances this call may take concrete historical, human and social forms. But it is always an encounter between two freedoms: the freedom of the Spirit and the freedom of the hearer. I am only a facilitator. Membership in the Church is not an easier or surer means of salvation. Baptism is not an opportunity, but a challenge and a mission. A Christian, like Christ, is a man for others. He is called, not only to live, but to witness. His witnessing must be enthusiastic, without anxiety and without aggressivity. It is unfortunate if we cannot be enthusiastic with what we have, without disparaging or feeling a hidden pity for those we look upon as have-nots!

Though a spiritual conversion or turning to God is at the root of

Baptism, it would be wrong to think that Baptism is a purely spiritual act; it is very much a socio-political act. One could ask for Baptism because one also sees it as an option for a superior culture or civilization, or as an opportunity for development, or as a protest against an oppressive group, or as an act of socio-political solidarity. The crisis of the mission in Asia is not unconnected with the memories of a colonial past, with renewed nationalism, with the perception of Christianity as foreign, and with the vulnerability of the Christian communities as small minority groups.

If the purpose of proclamation is not simply to save people but to build up effective witnessing communities, then some of the present policies may need revision. The Gospel must be preached to the poor and one should not neglect what are sometimes called responsive groups. But, on the other hand, are the cultural elite being neglected? Are we unfaithful to the basic insights of Roberto de Nobili and Matteo Ricci, or even Francis Xavier who asked for learned men to be sent to Japan?

Proclamation is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Even when we cannot build up a Christian community, we can still communicate the values of the Kingdom. We can really speak of the acknowledged Christ of the Hindu renaissance in India. At the same time, we can understand the mysterious ways of divine providence if we realise that such communication of the values of the Kingdom has taken place not necessarily because of, but sometimes in spite of, the Church in India. To take but one celebrated example, Gandhi would probably trace the Christian influence on him to Tolstoy, Ruskin, the Quakers in England, rather than to any Christians in India. This is not to deny that the Churches are doing a lot of good work in India, but only to point out that God's ways are not always our ways.

If the mystery of salvation depends basically on the encounter between an individual and God, then all mediations are just that, relative—not in relation to one another but in relation to the mystery—except the One Mediator who is part of the mystery itself. If the Church cannot claim any exclusivity, then what it can claim is a special knowledge, thanks to a special revelation in Jesus, an assurance based on the paschal mystery, and a vision of the whole world moving to its ultimate unity when God will be all in

all. Even this knowledge and assurance is of a structural kind, as I have tried to explain above, and is different from an assurance that is born of a personal spiritual experience. This special knowledge is not a privilege, but a mission. Awareness of the goal, however, does not give an awareness of the concrete ways in which God proposes to lead the world to this goal.

### *Why Dialogue?*

As soon as one no longer sees the relationship of Christianity to other religions as presence/absence or superior/inferior or full, partial, etc., dialogue becomes the context in which even proclamation has to take place. For even when proclaiming the Good News with assurance one has to do it with great respect for the freedom of God who is acting, the freedom of the other who is responding and the Church's own limitations as a witness. It is quite proper then that the Asian Bishops characterised evangelization itself as a dialogue with various Asian realities: cultures, religions and the poor.

When faith encounters faith no other way but dialogue is possible, if one respects the other's convictions. When a developed metacosmic religion meets a simple cosmic one, the relationship may not be equal culturally. But when one metacosmic religion meets another, dialogue seems the only possible way. Besides, one cannot hold on to an absolute commitment of faith without relativising the other from one's own point of view. Karl Rahner, in a rare moment, tells us the following story:

Nishitani, the well-known Japanese philosopher, the head of the Kyoto school, who is familiar with the notion of the anonymous Christian, once asked me: What would you say to my treating you as an anonymous Zen Buddhist? I replied: Certainly you may and should do so from your point of view; I feel myself honoured by such an interpretation, even if I am obliged to regard you as being in error, or if I assume that, correctly understood, to be a genuine Zen Buddhist is identical with being a genuine Christian, in the sense directly and properly intended by such statements. Of course in terms of objective social awareness it is indeed clear that the Buddhist is not a Christian and the Christian is not a Buddhist.<sup>38</sup>

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38. K. RAHNER, "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation", *Theological Investigations XVI*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979, p. 219.

A faith commitment gives an absolute value not only to the Absolute, but also to the real-symbol that mediates that Absolute. Two believers who meet each other, even when they realise that the Absolute to which they are both committed is the same, do not on that account relativise the mediating real-symbols. That is why a sort of super-theology that would reconcile in a higher synthesis two absolute commitments is not possible, though it would always remain a rational temptation. One can escape this predicament only at the level of an inter-personal relationship that not only respects each other's freedom and the sovereign freedom of God, but also enters into a convergent movement through mutual sharing of experiences leading to mutual challenge and mutual growth.<sup>39</sup>

Proclamation and dialogue are relationships between persons. In the last analysis, the plurality of free persons is the basis of a pluralistic world. Plurality demands dialogue and community. It abhors system. Plurality, freedom, dialogue and community should pose no problem for people who contemplate the Trinity.

### *Conclusion*

I began this paper by speaking of a new paradigm. I have briefly outlined it earlier in the paper. Now as conclusion let me briefly state some of the implications that I have tried to draw out that paradigm.

First of all, we must accustom ourselves to a new way of thinking from below, reflecting from experience and reality and not from above, in the abstract, deductively.

Secondly, experiencing the positive value for salvation of other religions, we must give them a place in the plan of God for the world.

Thirdly, we must realise that the Church is a complex reality consisting of a historic visible and a mysteric level, namely, the

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39. Cf. SECRETARIATUS PRO NON-CHRISTIANIS, *doc. cit.*: "In dialogue, also, the Christian normally nourishes in his heart the desire of sharing his experience of Christ with his brother of another religion (Acts 26:29; ES 46). On the other hand, it is natural that another believer would similarly desire to share his faith... Dialogue thus becomes a source of hope and a factor of communion in mutual transformation" (nn. 40, 43).

Church-community and the Church-mystery. When we speak of the Church in the context of other religions, it would help to avoid confusion if we are careful to talk about the Church-community. The other religions too participate in the Church-mystery. The Church-community is historically and socio-culturally limited, though it is part of the process of the growing Kingdom. The fulness is in the future, not in the past.

Fourthly, we should take seriously the Chalcedonian admonition neither to separate nor to confuse the two natures in Christ. We should rethink the principle of *communicatio idiomatum*. We must remember the *kenosis* and the socio-historical and cultural limitedness of the man Jesus. Again, the *pleroma* of which St Paul speaks is in the future, not in the past. Our faith affirmation that Christ died for all, however explained, does not do away with the limitations of Jesus as man and the Church-community that continues his presence on this earth.

Mission and dialogue are converging movements in the context of a common commitment to a new humanity that takes seriously the freedom and the creativity of man and God.

# Mary, a Symbol for Artists and Priests

By Caroline MACKENZIE\*

**T**HE following exploration on the figure of Mary as a human being and also as a symbol of the spiritual life has arisen out of two life-situations in which I find myself at present. By first explaining my point of departure, my reflections will be seen in their context and thus will perhaps be more comprehensible.

## *Mary and the Priest*

My first situation is my life in the precincts of an ancient but very frequented Vishnu temple at Melkote in South India. This is a centre for Sri Vaishnavism founded by Sri Ramanujacharya at the end of the 10th century A.D. It was while seeing one of the most important festivals in the temple, called "Vairumudi" that the link between Mary and the priest arose in my mind.

During the festival, the *utsava mūrti* (festival deity) wears a diamond crown and is carried slowly round the temple amidst the crowds of pilgrims. This particular crown is unlike any other, and the way in which it flashes reminded me of the opening lines in St Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* where she envisions the soul as "a castle made of a single diamond . . . in which there are many rooms, just as in heaven there are many mansions."<sup>1</sup> The festival creates a very strong visual impression. Raised high above the heads of all the people the image is seen with its flashing diamond crown. In front of it the priest waves a fan raising up his arm towards the deity to do so. Beyond we see the strong men carrying the dais of the image and the crowds of pilgrims.

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1. St. TERESA OF AVILA, *Interior Castle*, transl. E. Allison Peers, Image Books Pub., 1961, p. 28.



The stance of the priest reminded me of Mary at the Annunciation. He appeared to me at that moment as if he were welcoming the spiritual realm, just as Mary welcomed the angel. He himself is at the level of the people, looking up at the deity like the crowds, and thus, like Mary, he seemed fully human. However, because of his different appearance, he stood out from the people just as Mary, chosen by God, stands out among all the people. The priest had a long hair tied in a juttu (bun) and wore shining ear rings. His whole appearance was one of youthfulness, and, somehow, on that occasion he looked to me like a young woman. I was reminded of Mary and of how she welcomed God's Word and brought it to birth for humanity.

### *Mary and the Artist*

The analogy between Mary and the artist arises in my mind out of my own vocation as a woman artist and the difficulties I find in handling certain religious symbols. As an artist I feel unable to relate to the traditional images of Mary in art, where her role as mother seems to be dominant. The message that comes to any young woman as she grows up is that motherhood in a *literal* (as distinct from the symbolic) sense is the highest ideal of a woman's life. But this role implies often that the talents of a woman never blossom to their full extent. Thus I have been looking for new ways of approaching and entering into the figure of Mary: firstly, to see what sort of a character she was apart from being a mother, and also to understand her as a *symbol* of women's creativity. I compare her bringing to birth the concrete reality, the Christ child who combines in himself heaven and earth, with the creative process in which the artist is involved. The artist too welcomes the word of God and struggles to give it a form. The ideal artist would do this as perfectly and naturally as Mary who opened herself to God and allowed his Spirit to work within her until she naturally gave birth to the child. The child grows, and becomes independent, and, in fact, teaches the mother. In the same way a work of art, if it is really inspired (and this can really be true not only of religious icons but also of other forms of art), enables those who see it, including the artist, to perceive the spirit through the form. I have personally found this to be especially true of Indian temple art and rituals, but also of the work of such artists as Vincent Van Gogh. The reason for my effort to reflect on Mary as an artist lies in a concern for a self-understanding through art and culture, and for developing the vision of our own potential as moulded by these factors.

In this essay I explore new ways in which we could understand the figure of Mary, her link with the Hindu mystical approach to God, and the social implications of her symbolism as it affects the lives of women in the world.

### Part I: The Picture of Mary in her Song the "Magnificat"

#### *A Response of Joy/Ānanda*

What strikes one first of all in the joyful outburst of the *Magnificat* is the directness and the breadth of Mary's character. Her response is instantaneous, without hesitation. Her acceptance of God's Word, to be made flesh as a child in her womb, has been total, without any opposition from her side, even though she would now be an unmarried mother, a situation unacceptable to the normal morals of her culture. As the central experience of Christ would be a direct affront to the values of the establishment, so it is now with Mary. But her relationship to God is of far greater importance to her than the opinion of her husband-to-be or of society at large, even though, according to the Mosaic law, she could be put to death for her "offence".

Mary shows herself to be a young woman of great independence. As far as one can see, she goes to Elizabeth all by herself: she does not call Joseph to come with her. Such a movement of the Spirit is also being felt in the world of women, who more and more want to be strong and independent. The meeting between the older Elizabeth and the younger Mary is a moving one. The Holy Spirit touches Elizabeth and enables her to perceive the hidden reality within her cousin Mary. The two women share their experience of God. They both know themselves to be the instruments of His divine will. Does not this recognition from a fellow human being, with the help of the Holy Spirit, lead Mary to deepen—her own knowledge of God?

Her primary response is one of joy: "My spirit exults in God my Saviour" (Lk 1:47). Like the Hindu theologians and specially the mystics of the Tamil tradition like Nammalvar and Andal,<sup>2</sup> she brings

2. See Friedhelm HARDY, *Viraha Bhakti. The Early History of Krishna Devotion in South India*. New Delhi, Oxf. Univ. Press, 1983. The main image used by Nammalvar and Andal to describe their experience of God is the love of a young woman for the divine Cowherd Krishna. These Tamil mystics with ten others are an important part of the Sri Vaishnava cult.

out the blissful character of the experience of God. This joy with which Mary experiences God makes her feel also his tremendous and awesome greatness. Who was Mary? She was nobody in any way at all special. From an ordinary background, without any deeper experience of life than the normal, God has chosen to reveal His purpose to her. She, however, knows that this call is of great future importance to others, not only herself: "All generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48). In other words, her response is archetypal,<sup>3</sup> so that people will be able for centuries to come to relate to it in their own search for God.

As she goes on in her song Mary reveals herself as a prophetess, theologian and philosopher. She has understood the nature of Yahveh. Not only that, she has a highly developed poetic sense through which to express it. As one grows, one becomes increasingly conscious of the greatness of God and of his miraculous power and, by contrast, of the smallness of humanity. Mary expresses her sense of the sacred: "And holy in his name!" She reveals her intense awareness of the majesty of God and her own smallness by contrast.

As a poetess, one of the paradoxes she brings out forcefully is the picture of a fierce God who is also a God of mercy: "His mercy reaches from age to age for those that fear Him" (v. 50). We are here reminded of the ambiguity of a Hindu God like Shiva who is *rudra*, the "roarer", but also *shiva*, "auspicious" and gentle.

### *Mysticism and Social Justice*

In Lk 1:51-52 we have a theme which echoes throughout the Bible and is symbolised over and over again in many stories related to the life-experience: "He has shown the power of his arm: He has rounded the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly."

In the book of Exodus God leads the children of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt by all sorts of unexpected and strange methods and means. The same pattern continues through the Bible, until the final mystery wherein those of a high established position, that is, Pilate

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<sup>3</sup>. "Archetypal" is used here in the way understood by C.G. JUNG in *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, transl. by R.F. Hull, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

and the High Priests, put Christ to death, but He rises from the dead and counfounds not only those temporally powerful people, but the general self-centredness of all finite human existence. These lines of the Magnificat, which are clearly socially oriented, have a revelatory ring perhaps not found in most of Hindu mysticism. (That the mystical response, however, can and should affect the outer social life as much as the inner prayer life will be explored in the later part of this paper.)

On the other hand, in other ways Mary's basic relation to society was very similar to that of certain Indian mystics. By accepting God's Word made flesh in her womb, although she was not even married and was thus to become an immoral woman in the eyes of the orthodox society, she anticipates the relation of the "girl" of Nammalvar's poetry who has fallen in love with the Lord Krishna.<sup>4</sup> The mother of the girl is put into agonies in her concern for the welfare of her daughter, about whom all the gossips in town speak mercilessly. But the girl is totally absorbed in the Lord. Similarly, for Mary her personal response to God's Word through the angel is primary and of far greater importance to her than what Joseph, her betrothed, will say or think, let alone other people.

Mary is a great symbol of hope because in her we see how God has a particular understanding of those of low status and apparently insignificant. In a way she symbolises our hope as women: we are often considered to be the weaker sex, with all that this implies. But we find that we can come to know God and be creative. Mary has directly experienced God's power, and this has awakened the creativity within her, so that it broadens out into the world as a whole. Thus she can now see and proclaim God's own plan for a just society.

It is almost as if Mary is at the centre of a great cycle of life, where things which have come to fruition must necessarily fall away, while those which are only just budding must rise up and become fruitful: "The hungry he has fallen with good things, the rich sent empty away" (v. 53). Often enough, we women feel poor and inadequate, and unable to articulate ourselves; and yet here is a woman who seems to know God so well that she understands this constant

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4. Cf. note 2.

cycle of life that works at all levels of existence and who is able to speak out her understanding.

In the last two verses of the Magnificat Mary reveals her sense of history in the remembrance of how in the past God has helped Israel. She is soaked in a culture of which she is a part, as she must often have heard the stories of the beginning and growth of her people. The fact that she is just a small speck in this long process of the revelation of God to humankind means that she is not proud as if God had chosen *only* her. Rather, her sense of time stretching back into early history and forward towards the birth of the Saviour and the establishment of God's Kingdom means that she has a sense of proportion. Without it she would have been a pig-headed school girl rather than a prophetess!

#### *A Comparison Between Mary and Zachariah*

In order to understand how distinct Mary's response to God was, and in a way how womanly also, it is interesting to see how the whole episode of the Annunciation and the Magnificat are situated in St Luke's Gospel. The story which precedes the Annunciation shows how God tells Zachariah that his barren and aged wife will bring forth a child. The response of Zachariah contrasts with that of Mary: he doubts the angel, and is struck dumb, in the words of the angel, "since you have not believed my words which will come true at their appointed time" (Lk.1:20). Zachariah ministered daily in the temple, he was a learned and presumably well-qualified priest, yet the Christ child was not to be received by him and his wife, but by a simple woman like Mary, whose response is a total surrender to God's word. This is not to minimise the importance of Zachariah and Elizabeth. The miracle of life engendered in the barren womb points towards the mystery of Christ. But this is what *precedes*, it is not the actual way in which the Messiah is to be received. Mary's response is a total giving of herself. To convey this sort of spiritual experience, so different from that of the temple priest, and to bring out its radiance to the full, the place of the story is important. Just as in a painting a portion in shadow makes a light part seem brighter than if the whole picture is painted in very bright colours, so the contrast with Zachariah's response makes that of Mary look more ecstatic. The emotional nature of Mary's response contrasts with that of Zachariah, even though he and his wife, one could imagine,

knew more about God: "Both were worthy in the sight of God and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of the Lord" (Lk 1:6).

Mary's relationship to God is striking in its *personal* character. Perhaps, Mary's response is much like that found running through Indian mysticism, wherein the soul of humanity is characterised as a young woman passionately in love with God. The fact that the sign given to her is in her own body, that is, the conception of the child in her womb, brings her to a very subjective approach in her relationship to God, an approach also characteristic of much of the Hindu experience of God. Just as a bharatanatya dancer speaks to God through her or his whole body, transforming it through devotion, so Mary's body becomes, in a certain way, the medium in which she replies to God. But one striking difference here is that the mysticism of Mary clearly involves an understanding of the social reality. Not only that, she also has a strong feeling that God is working through her and through all humanity, to bring about a change in society.

## Part II: The Changing Social Reality of Women Brings in a New Interpretation of Symbols

As the life experience of people, and specially that of women, changes, the biblical figure of Mary takes on new dimensions. Unlike what happened a hundred years ago, nowadays there is a fairly large proportion of educated women who are brought up with more or less similar expectations, as far as opportunities and education go, as their brothers. They begin to think that if they have any specific talent they have the right to bring it to fruition, as far as possible.

However, it is difficult for this new type of woman to develop an identity because often there are no older women with whom she can identify. She can, of course, emulate men who have the same talents as those she recognises in herself, for example, the talents of an artist or of a theologian. But then there will be a sort of break in authenticity, since the basic starting point of the experience of a woman and a man cannot be the same. In the previous section we tried to point out the difference of response between Zachariah and Mary. Mary, therefore, could perhaps become a model for these creative women. Since she is clearly the most "creative" woman in the entire Bible (that is, she is the artisan of the Word made flesh), she would seem to have a claim to being such a model. The interpretation of her,

however, that one usually encounters, especially in "religious" pictures, is that of an ideal mother: the implication seems to be that motherhood should be the supreme goal of women. Her softness and gentleness are emphasized to the exclusion of all other qualities.

When one looks at religious art one notices how each century and society displays its response to religious figures and symbols. The Christ of modern Indian art looks almost unrecognisable to someone brought up on the Italian renaissance style. It is the same person of Christ that is depicted, but he is endowed with the breath of another culture. In the same way I would like to see Mary depicted in a new way, as artist, mystic and theologian.

### *Mary as a Symbol Rooted in the Sense Experience*

In a symbolic sense Mary represents a response to God *through the whole being*. In the Biblical story the virginity of Mary is stressed. It is her purity that makes her particularly open to God's Word. Yet, at the same time, she was a full-fledged young woman with all her senses open. One of the ways in which my own perception of Mary was changed after seeing the Vairamudi festival was in the awareness of her "sensuousness". At the centre of the Vaishnava approach to God there is the theme of bridal mysticism. Every devotee, be it man or woman, desires to experience his or her relationship with the divine, the same degree of intensity of love, as is found in the human love at its most passionate point. The result of this seems to be that the sense experience is seen as a valid way to approach God, and this is also the basis for the art experience. Rather than being something to be suppressed, the senses are means through which the transcendent reality is sought. As an artist, this perception released in me a deep spring of creativity which had previously been blocked. One notices in the Vaishnava cult that the priesthood, as it were, re-enacts this experience of reaching the divine through the senses, and it is this which helps to make the festivals and rituals so potent as a source of inspiration for the devotees. It is on these occasions far more than by learned discourses that people have an insight into the divine reality. This links with the Annunciation mystery, the first movement of humanity receiving God in its flesh.

*Birth and Flight into Egypt Symbolic of Every New Birth<sup>5</sup>*

In the mystery of the flight into Egypt we seem to have a spiritual pattern found in many traditions where the birth of a new spiritual reality or a new idea is the cause of much anxiety in the mind of the establishment. When Herod hears that the Christ is born and that he will become a great spiritual king, he orders all the first-born to be murdered. A similar response is found in the Indian story of Krishna. When King Kamsa hears that his sister will give birth to a great spiritual king, he kills every male child that she has. She is finally thrown into prison and it is there that Krishna is born and is taken to safety over a river. The whole story surely bears comparison with the birth of Christ in a stable and the flight to another land from that of his birthplace.

Certain parallels in the spiritual life are here suggested. The heroes and heroines of the stories can be taken not only as historical or mythological figures, but also as representing the warring factions in the consciousness of an individual. The spiritual birth following conversion, it would seem, often happens in an unlikely place outside the established way of doing things, and this is symbolised by the prison and the stable. After this spiritual birth from the establishment or orthodoxy, there is an attempt to squash the new life. In the myths stories, it is the temporally powerful king who wants to do this. In the individual, it may be the traditional conventional understanding of the self which prefers the person to stay as she or he is and does not want to be changed by the new spiritual consciousness, symbolised by the spiritual children. In order that they may survive, the children are taken to distant places and they flourish there. This should seem to indicate that the conversion experience requires also a "crossing of the river", away from the temporal establishment with all its power and pomp.

*The Role of Joseph in Supporting Mary: Women's Creativity to be Understood, Encouraged and Nurtured by Men*

If Mary represents one of the actors in the psycho/spiritual drama which is being played out in each of us, then she is certainly

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5. The method employed in this and the following sections is derived from C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, transl. by R.F.C. Hull, London, Routledge, and Kegan Paul, 1956. Cf. also the *Bihar School of Yoga Magazine*, Vol. 20, No. 12, December 1982, pp. 1-4.



as much a part of the male as of the female experiences. It may be useful also to look at how Joseph, Mary's husband, plays a vital rôle in the reception of God's Word on earth. There seems to me to have been an over-emphasis on Mary's rôle: in the nativity pictures Joseph is portrayed very much in the background, as a non-participating onlooker. This probably reflects the artists' experiences of parenthood, both in birth and nurture, which traditionally is seen almost entirely as a woman's job. The twentieth century has witnessed a change in this area, and in some places it has become a standard practice for the man to participate in the birth of his child, and certainly to be more active even in its early upbringing.

This new social reality may lead us, I hope, to a more balanced symbolism. It would seem to me important to emphasize the part played by Joseph in the bringing to birth of Christ. In Hinduism also the male-female balance is constantly kept, every goddess having a male counterpart and vice versa. The faith of Joseph in Mary's experience is expressed in his support of her, in spite of his initial suspicion, and against what must have seemed to orthodox Jewish society an improper situation. In his own way, he is obedient, like Mary, to that the angel tells him. The escape from Herod is realised as a necessity only by Joseph.

This brings in the question of interpreting the Mary-Joseph wholeness. Do Mary and Joseph represent two sides of the psyche—Mary the intuitive, devotional, vulnerable side, and Joseph the more practical aspect? Does he tell us that for the inner life to continue it has to be taken away from the land of birth? Would the place where the new awareness comes into being be where the old ways of thinking, symbolised by the powerful Herod, would extinguish it? Or is Joseph simply to be taken more literally, as a man who is ready to help Mary in her creative rôle?

#### *Joseph to be Included in the Symbol of the Church*

Some women feel the need to be creative and to speak about the new reality through some form of beauty. They want to become artists. Such women experience a profound sense of being misfits within the traditional feminine symbolism, when, for example, the Church, a feminine symbol, is referred to as "sacred vessel", "holy mother", etc. These expressions seem to imply that to be feminine is to fulfil a strong

supportive role. But the woman artist is a person who is deeply interested in creating. She often has no time to play a supportive role. Does this mean that she is actually not a woman, that is, that by being involved in making and doing, and actually herself in need of support, she is in fact cutting herself away from her own basic pattern as a woman? When women emerge as equal creators with men, and both experience the need of support, it would seem necessary to find ways of articulating better the supportive role of men towards women. Culture is shaped by symbols, which somehow channelise our deeper energies. Therefore, in order to develop the supportive qualities in men as well as in women, I would suggest a characterisation of the Church as Mary-and-Joseph. In this I would like to see the Church's role as being potentially supportive of all human creativity. By bringing Joseph more closely into the basic symbolism of the Church men may perhaps begin to understand their role in supporting women in their creativity. Women should surely continue to support men in their work, as we so very often see them doing. Yet this should not be to the point where they suppress their own creativity in order to fulfil their supportive role towards men, even if this has been traditionally their accepted and acclaimed role.

#### *The Relation of Priest, Artist and Mary*

The work of a priest and an artist can be closely linked, specially in the Indian Vaisnava tradition. Here the priest, with the help of various signs, symbols and rituals "evokes" a reality which is beyond all the ephemeral things. Similarly, a really inspired work of art "incarnates" the spiritual reality. The greatest icon was Christ himself, who combined in one the divine and the human nature. The human person who made this to happen was Mary, the mother of Christ. She made the divine-human synthesis real, her child Jesus. The priest also can, if the rituals are succinct and meaningful, co-operate in reaching towards the divine even taking the material and human world as the starting point.

#### *The Social Reality of Women-Priests and Artists*

While, however, Mary can be seen as the symbol for the priest and the artist, in our social reality women are very rarely priests. Even when they are, in my experience of meeting some women ministers in the non-conformist churches (e.g., the Baptists), I have found

that often they are not taken as seriously as men, although they perform the same functions. It is perhaps significant and to be taken into account that it is in the Protestant tradition where art and liturgy play a relatively minor role that women are allowed to officiate.

Why, then, it is important to have women ministers/priests? I think that the answer lies in the fact that the roles assigned to people are deeply symbolic and therefore powerful in shaping society. The women minister becomes an example for the community. In her priestly capacity she combines the response of both Mary and Jesus. As a woman I found it a profoundly transforming experience to see a woman minister, a member of my own sex, taking her relationship to God so seriously and expressing it publicly and representatively of the whole community. Of course, there are many women who live Christ-like lives, but the charism or symbolic dimension of the minister seemed to me to be connected with her sacramental involvement. Perhaps this is similar to the sense of a newly found self-respect experienced by Indian Christians when their own people are ordained in place of the foreign missionaries, however well meaning the latter might have been.

At another level, as a creative artist, I was also aware that whole areas of experience, especially the mystical and the artistic, as expressed in liturgy or visual representation, were not welcomed in the tradition of my friend, the Protestant woman-minister. This is not because she was against it, but because her tradition was originally founded on the idea of clearing away from the Church these aspects of the tradition. It is a pity that the more ritualistic or liturgical or open to the plastic arts a tradition is, the less it has women involved sacramentally in its worship.

In Hinduism this exclusion is specially based on the firm belief that women are ritually polluting at the time of their menstruation and after child birth. There are Christians who share these fears, although they are generally more veiled. The femininity of the male Hindu priest described above shows how the woman dimension is ritualistically included in the worship when the priest assumes a feminine stance—a solution considered safe, since he is ritually "pure"! The final message conveyed about a woman's body is therefore split apart. On the one hand, her emotional response is at the heart of the mystical creative experience of the divine, while, on the other, she is excluded in real life because she is polluted.

As noted above, the sacramental involvement of women in worship is connected with the growth of a sense of self-assurance and creative potential at the inner and outer levels. It therefore seems necessary to discover from where the opposition to such involvement arises in the Christian context. There do not seem to be scriptural objections, since Jesus was not frightened by the emotions of women, nor did he consider them polluting. The first point is demonstrated by the incident in Simon the Pharisee's house (Lk 7:36-39) where a woman kisses the feet of Jesus and washes them with her tears. Jesus clearly commends her action. The second is shown by the woman whose issue of blood has gone on for twelve years (Mt 9:20) and by the fact that he accepted water from a Samaritan woman (Jn 4:7ff). Both of these women would have been deeply offensive to an orthodox Jew. That Jesus gave time to women and felt that it was worthwhile to discuss with them is seen in the incident with Mary and Martha, where Mary took "the better part" by listening and discussing rather than by following the traditional role of a housewife looking after the guests. However, in spite of Christ's openness to women, most of our society and of the Church do not accept their full participation.

The dilemma with which women are at present faced is a choice between a certain authentic recognition of their being and creativity as found in the Catholic and Hindu traditions, but subject to limitation to the extent that they cannot be sacramentally involved; or enjoying an equality as ministers legally acknowledged, but apparently at the expense of their artistic creativity and even at times of their psychological wholeness. While the Catholic and Hindu traditions have encouraged art and mysticism as a valid means through which to evoke the divine, the Protestant movement has on the whole viewed these with suspicion. In the first case the symbol of Mary as reflected upon here can be realised by women at the imaginative and creative level, but not in the social reality of the priesthood, while in the second situation the freedom of women is allowed but her ministry may be misunderstood if based on this sort of symbolic interpretation of Mary. The modern woman who desires to approach reality through art and mysticism has to pay a high price as far as participation in the world of the Church or cult goes. The hope is that women artists will help the church adapt its symbolic self-understanding and to allow women to fully participate, both creatively and sacramentally.

# Note

## The Extraordinary Synod

The Second Extraordinary Synod met for two weeks from 24th November to 8th December 1985. There were 166 participants with voting rights: 14 from the Oriental Churches, 104 Presidents of Episcopal Conferences, 3 Superiors General, 24 from the Curia, 21 specially Nominated and 1 General Secretary. Of these, 93 were from the Third World. Besides these, there were 12 theologians, 15 auditors including 5 sisters and 8 lay people, 10 observers from other Churches and 15 special invitees. 63 of the participants had taken part in the Second Vatican Council.

The Extraordinary Synod was called to celebrate, verify and promote the Second Vatican Council. One would have expected it to be a joyful event. In fact, the ecclesiastical air was full of vague fears and apprehensions before the Synod and quite subdued during the Synod itself. A series of events seemed to legitimize those fears. The condemnation of certain types of liberation theology, the "process" against theologians like Kung, Schillebeeckx and Boff, the attempt to call to order religious congregations like the Jesuits, the Carmelites and the Franciscans, the Vatican-sponsored meeting of the Dutch Bishops, the proposals for curial reform which seemed to take away the autonomy of the three Secretariats (for Christian Unity, for Non-Christians and for Non-Believers), an interview of Card. J. Ratzinger which dwelt mainly on the negative aspects of the Church and spoke about the need of a "restoration"—all these were perceived as efforts to control, even to set back the movement of freedom, openness and renewal that set in with the Second Vatican Council. In this atmosphere the call for an Extraordinary Synod to celebrate the Council was seen as a call to "correct" it or at least certain interpretations of it. On the other hand, the positive evaluations of the time after the Council by some of the Conferences of Bishops, not ignoring the areas that need further study and clarification, the appointment of Card. G. Danneels as Special Reporter and Walter Kasper as Special Secretary, and the brevity of the Synod itself, were seen as rays of hope.

The mood after the Synod seemed to be a sigh of relief that the fears were mostly unfounded. However, one could hardly detect any great enthusiasm. The strong re-affirmation of the Council as authentic tradition and the commitment to promote its further study and implementation is welcome. But the most important fruit of all is the strengthening of the institutions of the Synod itself shown in the publication, not only of a special message, but also of the final Report of its deliberations, approved by a big majority. After 1971, the custom had been to hand over the conclusions of the Synods to the Pope, who later wrote an Apostolic Exhortation on the theme in question.

The first report presented to the Synod by Card. Danneels was rather theological in its approach and centred round the four major

documents of the Council on the Church, the Liturgy, the Word of God and the Church in the Modern World. The interventions of the Fathers tended to be more pastoral. But the general focus, to a large extent, was on the Church: the Church as mystery, as Communion and as People; the reality of the local Church, the need for collegiality and autonomy, the role of the episcopal conferences. While the Third World Bishops were concerned by problems of inculturation and dialogue with other religions, those from the First World seemed to be more concerned by the problem of secularization, and therefore the need for orthodoxy, on the one hand, and for the promotion of a sense of mystery, on the other. The overall impression is that the Synod was not so much concerned about the world and its problems—though these are mentioned. The focus was more on the Church itself, its identity and its structures. At the Council the Church facing the modern world spoke of joy and hope. There was great enthusiasm to transform the world. Twenty years later the Church seems less sanguine about what it can do, less assured of itself and more inward-looking, blaming itself for not being effective in its mission to the world.

It is in the analysis of the causes of such a lack of efficiency that one notices the profound difference of attitudes and assessment that exists in the Church today. In my opinion, the Synod has not faced up to this radical difference in approaches. The result could be that the continuing study and implementation to the Council may be plagued by the same kind of divisions that has existed in the first twenty years after the Council. Some focus in the world, whereas others tend to focus on the Church. One group demands for a greater interiorization of the spirit of the Council, while others ask for concrete structural reforms both in the Church and in the world. Some would emphasize the "mystery" of the Church, while others tend to point to its human and institutional aspects. Some stress orthodoxy, thinking that once the faith is properly explained everything will be alright—they want a catechism. Others think that what is wrong with the Church is its ortho-praxis, and that the Church is not living up to the ideals of reform and renewal it proposed to itself at the Council. At the Synod itself those who emphasized mystery, orthodoxy, interiority, etc., seem to have had the upper hand. While these are strongly affirmed, structural and pastoral problems make up a list of issues that need "further study": inculturation, dialogue with other religions, subsidiarity in the Church, preferential option for the poor, the promotion of justice, the prophetic role of the religious, new liturgical forms, the autonomy of the local Churches, etc. One regrets that even the little advances that have been made in the post-conciliar period in these areas have not been integrated and that their urgency and relevance for the contemporary Church have not been recognised—at least as being as important as a universal catechism. If one could speak of a dialectic between creativity and maintenance in the ongoing life of any movement, one could say that the Extraordinary Synod has opted for maintenance, strengthened, of course, with demands for interiorization and consolidation.

My point is not that such consolidation is not necessary. But if the Church is not constantly open to the challenges of the world, we may be consolidating a good but inadequate instrument in the project of evangelization. One example will be sufficient to clarify my point. If the youth today are not attracted by the Church, it is not because they need more and better catechesis about the mystery of the Church. What they need is rather to see a Church more involved, more relevant to the problems of the world, and one that allows them more real responsibility and participation and offers them a deeper experience of the mystery through appropriate celebration of life and community.

The ecumenical movement received a strong endorsement and encouragement from the Synod Fathers. A concrete indication of this is the demand by many that the Secretariat for Christian Unity be raised to the status of a "Congregation". The strong affirmation by the Synod of the Church as a communion is probably one of the important developments in the Synod that will have real and serious consequences for the ecumenical movement in the years to come.

A point of tension at the Synod was the clear expression of a sense of oppression by all the Bishops of the various Oriental Churches with regard to the Latin Church. It is unfortunate, of course, that four out of the five interventions from India were on the problem of "Rites". We cannot deny, on the one hand, a certain domination by the Latin Church. On the other hand, an uneasy co-existence of many Churches in one particular cultural and historical context seems unwelcome. One should really think of creative solutions to this problem. Local Churches should develop with a certain autonomy in dialogue with the local situation and culture, and integrate all the riches that they receive from various Ritual traditions. In India, for instance, could we think of an Indian Rite that would integrate the riches of the various Ritual traditions and would be a unity-in-plurality, given the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Indian people?

At the end of the Extraordinary Synod some one remarked that though it was dominated by Third World participants, it centred round First World concerns. The Synod is a reminder that we still have to learn to handle pluralism in the Church in such a way as to be an enrichment rather than a danger to unity.

Twenty years is too short a time to "evaluate" the movement of renewal that started with the Council. In the meantime, the world has not stopped moving. One could even say that it has been moving fast. It is necessary that our reading the signs of the times keeps pace with this change. The Synod has come as a challenge to deepen our knowledge of the Council and to promote its implementation. An openness to the Spirit talking to us both through the signs of the times and the tradition of the Church is the best way to meet the challenge in a loyal manner.

M. AMALADOSS, S.J.

# Document

## The Synod's Final Report



The 1985 Synod was for the Church a time of intense reflection and self-examination with respect to its fidelity to Vatican II. We carry elsewhere a report of how the Synod belied the fears and apprehensions of many people, and showed a mature Church realistically assessing itself, counting its strengths and weaknesses, and pointing to areas of growth towards which it wants to go.

Unlike other Synods, this one published two documents: the first is a 3-page message to the world, already published in our weekly magazines, which significantly ends by a reference to the 1987 Synod of the laity that "concerns the whole church".

The second document is a 12-page *Relatio Finalis* that sums up the findings and the recommendations of the Synod.<sup>1</sup> The title of the document is involved: "The Church, led by the Word of God,<sup>2</sup> Celebrating the Mystery of Christ for the Salvation of the World."<sup>3</sup> The complexity of the title is undoubtedly due to an effort to allude explicitly to the four Constitutions or main documents of Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium* on the Church, *Dei Verbum* on Revelation, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on Liturgy and *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the World.

The Relation has two parts. Part I deals with the general findings of the Synod and Part II with specific issues. Each part or section of it ends with the concrete suggestions of the Synod on the matter treated in that part or section.

I. The Synod sees itself as an act of celebration, verification and promotion of Vatican II. The document starts with an act of thanks for the spiritual experience of the Synod, an experience of oneness in faith, hope, Church union and the "unanimous will" to translate Vatican II into practice in the life of the Church. After celebrating the Council, the Fathers of the Synod say,

Unanimously and joyfully we also VERIFY that the Council is a legitimate and valid expression and interpretation of the deposit of faith as it is found

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1. We have two versions of the document. A Latin version without date, and an English version released by the Holy See Press Office on December 9th, 1985, one day after the synod. The two versions do not always coincide. I present here a summary of the main ideas of the text in the words of the document (English version, occasionally corrected in the light of the Latin), with a few personal comments. At the end of my presentation, I print together the concrete "Suggestions" or recommendations made by the Synod according to the sections in which they come, and which we shall number in our summary.

2. In Latin, *sub verbo Dei*: the Vatican English version translates "in the Word of God". In the Message of the Holy Father to the Synod the same Holy See Press Office translates the same expression as, "in the light of the Word of God." "Led by the Word of God" seems to come closest to the Latin.

3. This title appears already as the heading of the *Relatio* of Cardinal G. Danneels, presented at the beginning of the Synod as a summary of the written communications received from all over the world.



in Sacred Scripture and in the living tradition of the Church. Therefore we are determined to progress further along the path indicated to us by the Council.

Such authoritative reaffirmation not only of the letter of the Council but also of its spirit, as it will be explicitly said later, and of the path along which we must go "further", is very important in the context of the suspicions raised in some quarters about its "orthodoxy." This reaffirmation of the Council may be considered as that spiritual "confirmation" which any spiritual discernment demands. It is not strange, then, that one of the main objectives of the Synod's recommendations is to promote further the knowledge and application of the Council both in its letter and spirit, because it is not legitimate to separate one from the other.

The Synods acknowledges the acceptance of the Council by the majority in the Church and the resistance to it by a few. It recognises shadows in the implementation, specially an alienation from the Church in the so-called first world, and a partial though positive acceptance of the same Church and her mission in countries where the Church is oppressed or where she raises her voice against social injustices.

The reasons for these difficulties are said to be the spirit of consumerism, the blindness to the spiritual realities and values, a selective reading of the Council, a hesitant application of the same, a unilateral, "sociological" presentation of the Church divorced of its dimension of mystery, in short "lack of the discernment of spirits."

This part ends with a call for a "deeper reception of the Council, for "only interior assimilation and practical implementation can make the conciliar documents alive and life-giving".

II. The second section of the document deals with the main particular issues treated in the discussion. It does so under four headings: Mystery, Sources, Communion and Mission.

II A. Analysing the signs of the times in the "brief" (?) 20-year period that separates us from the Council the Synod believes there has been both an increase of secularism, with the neglect of the sense of mystery, and a return to the sacred, a new hunger and thirst for the divine. The spread of the "sects" may indicate that we may "have sometimes failed to sufficiently manifest the sense of the sacred." The mystery we must reveal is "the mercy and charity of God manifested in salvation history and which through Jesus Christ reaches its culmination". "The Church makes herself more credible if she speaks less of herself and ever more preaches Christ crucified and witnesses to him through her life". "The Vatican II message about the Church is theocentric and christocentric."

The Church derives her importance from her connection with Christ, and therefore a mere sociological study of the Church is

incomplete. Its eschatological dimension must not be forgotten. "But she remains the Church of the poor, of sinners and of those who suffer amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations from God, moving towards the future Kingdom!"<sup>4</sup> Hence there is a call to promote energetically the sense of penance, prayer, adoration, sacrifice, self-giving, charity and justice;<sup>5</sup> and "the apostolic movements and new movements of spirituality are (seen as) the bearers of great hope, if they properly remain in ecclesial communion."

II B (a) The second section of Part II deals with the sources of the life of the Church, i.e., "The Word of God" and "The Liturgy." The section on the Word of God is perhaps the most developed, under the three headings, "Scripture, tradition, magisterium", "evangelization" and "the relations between the magisterium of the bishops and the theologians". The section complains that the Constitution on Divine Revelation (DV) is the most neglected of the documents of Vatican II. There is again a stress on the magisterium.

Evangelization must first take the form of an "integral and systematic catechesis" of the young who are in danger of losing the faith and moral values deriving from the Gospel. "The evangelization of the non-believers presupposes the self-evangelization of the baptized and also, in a certain sense (*sic!*), of deacons, priests and bishops". Evangelization takes place through "witness", which suggests martyrdom. "In this respect, the more ancient Churches can learn much from the new Churches, from their dynamism, from their life and testimony, even unto shedding of their blood for the faith." (It seems to me that this fine testimony is a clear allusion to the example of courageous Christian life offered to us by the modern Latin American martyrs and their churches).

The section ends by affirming that "theology is specifically necessary to the life of the Church today", as it was during the Vatican Council, and that "communication and reciprocal dialogue between bishops and theologians are necessary for the building up of the faith."

II B (b) On the Liturgy there is a call for a deeper spiritual participation in the liturgy, permeated by "a spirit of reverence, adoration and the glory of God", a call that should be particularly welcome in India.

II C. The third section of Part II deals with the Church as Communion (a theme dear "to the early Church and the Oriental Churches to this day"), "fundamentally a matter of communion with God

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4. The English version in my hands blanks out the word "poor", clearly included in the Latin version. The English has: "Yet she remains a holy church that has sinners in her midst, that must ever be purified, and that moves amidst the persecutions of this world and the consolations of God, towards the future kingdom (cf. LG 8)."

5. "Charity and justice" are not found in the Latin text.

through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit." Therefore, this reality cannot be reduced to an organisational or juridical question. "Still, the ecclesiology of communion is the foundation for order in the Church, and specially for a correct relationship between unity and pluriformity in the Church."

In this context the relation of unity and pluriformity is pointed out. The one God, one Mediator, one Spirit, one baptism and one Eucharist are the foundations of the "unity and unicity of the Church". As one, the Church can be an instrument of unity and reconciliation and peace among men, nations, classes, peoples. The Petrine ministry is seen as a service to unity. On the other hand, the variety of gifts is equally affirmed in 2 Cor 12 and in Vatican II. "It is necessary to distinguish pluriformity from mere pluralism. Since pluriformity is true richness and brings in fullness, it is true catholicity. The pluralism of fundamentally opposed positions, instead, leads to dissolution, destruction and loss of identity."

There is then a (somewhat paternalistic?) reaffirmation of the value of the Oriental churches. This leads to a long discussion on collegiality that "is much more extensive than its mere juridical aspect," and must operate at all levels. In the strictest theological sense, we are told, collegiality "implies the activity of the whole college, together with its head, over the entire church." Its best expression are the ecumenical councils,<sup>6</sup> but there are many other authentic signs and instruments of the collegial spirit: the synods, the episcopal references, the curia, the "ad limina" visits, the pastoral visits of the Holy Father, etc. These are regulated by ecclesial law.<sup>7</sup> About the episcopal conferences in particular the Synod points to their utility and says that they must keep in mind, on the one hand, the good and

6. In this context, the Synod reminds us of the clarification made in the "note of explanation" of LG to the effect that one cannot and should not oppose the College of Bishops to the Pope, but distinguish rather "between the Roman Pontiff alone (*seorsim*) and the Roman Pontiff together with the bishops, because the college exists with its 'head' and never without him, the subject of supreme and full power in the whole Church (LG 22)." Here the English translation is doctrinally misleading. As is clear from the Latin and the LG 22, the "subject" of supreme and full power does not here refer to the "head" or the Pope, but to the College, in union with the Pope. Moreover, this argument needs further theological reflection: for if it is true that the body cannot exist without the head, it is equally true that the head cannot exist without the body, and therefore the affirmation that the Pope acting "alone" is the subject of authority will need to explain the meaning of "alone" (*seorsim*): precisely because he is the head, therefore representative of the Church, the Pope cannot by definition ever act "alone" in the strict sense.

7. Is it not true that ecumenical councils are also regulated by "ecclesial law"? One may be led to think that the scholastic distinction between "divine (positive) law" and "ecclesial law" is not so clear-cut and useful as it might seem. On the other hand, one would have to make theological distinctions between the various expressions of collegial spirit mentioned in this paragraph: the synodal character of the episcopate, its functioning through regional collegiality (and therefore the modern expression of episcopal conferences) seem to have a greater weight of tradition and theological value than, for instance, the curial set-up or the *ad limina* visits, which are of relatively more recent origin.

unity of the universal Church and, on the other, the inalienable responsibility of each bishop.

On the broader areas of participation and co-responsibility in the Church "at all levels", the Synod calls first for friendly relations and full trust between bishops and their priests, deacons and co-workers. There is a clear acknowledgement that women have not yet found their full place in the Church:

In recent years there has often been discussion regarding the vocation and the mission of women. May the Church do its utmost so that they might be able to express, in the service of the Church, their own gifts and to play a greater part in the various fields of the Church's apostolate. May pastors gratefully accept and promote the collaboration of women in ecclesial activity.

The question of ecumenism is rightly placed within this context of communion (and not with dialogue, which comes in the next section). There is in the Synod a vigorous affirmation of ecumenism as inscribed "deeply and indelibly in the consciousness of the Church" and a desire to proceed on to "full communion." Even at this level, "dialogue is authentic if it presents the truth with love and fidelity towards the Church."

II D. The fourth and last section, (and perhaps the weakest) of this second Part deals with "The Mission of the Church in the World". It starts with a reaffirmation of *Gaudium at Spes*, although it seems to correct its somewhat optimistic view by stressing that today "we witness an increase in hunger, oppression, injustice and war, suffering, terrorism and other forms of violence of every sort." Hence the Synod wants us not to forget a theology of the cross when dealing with the relation of the Church to the world, although a theology of the cross "does not at all exclude the theology of creation and incarnation, but . . . presuppose it."<sup>8</sup>

In the light of the doctrine of the cross and resurrection the authentic meaning of "aggiornamento" is discovered: it is neither an "easy accomodation" nor "an immobile closing in upon itself of the community," but a missionary openness for the integral salvation of the world wherein all truly human values are accepted and energetically defended. Inculturation must be seen in this light as not simply an external adaptation but "an intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the rooting of Christianity into various human cultures."<sup>9</sup>

8. Already during Vatican II, the composition of GS was criticised by some German theologians as being too optimistic, too influenced by the French school of theology. With W. Kaspers at the head of the Synod theologians, one might say that the Synod has followed more the German perception than the French tradition of GS.

9. The English version with me has one missing line and makes no sense. I quote the Latin: *Inculturatio tamen a mera adaptatione externa diversa est, quia intimam transformationem authenticorum valorum culturalium per integrationem in christianismum et radicationem christianismi in variis culturis humanis significat.*

The last two subsections deal with issues extremely alive in the Third World. One is the question of dialogue, which the Synod re-affirms with Vatican II, connected with a theology of the salvation of all people of good will. (NA 2, LG 16). Dialogue is not opposed to mission, but aims at the communication to the partner of one's intimate spiritual experience.

The second key concept is the preferential option for the poor, not indeed taken as implying exclusivism but as an attitude where the spirit of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ shines forth ("blessed are the poor" Mt 5:3, Lk 6:20; Jesus wishes to be poor for us, 2<sup>d</sup> Cor 8:9). The Synod is eloquent on this topic:

The Church must prophetically denounce every form of poverty and oppression and everywhere defend and promote the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person . . . The Synod expresses its communion with those brothers and sisters who suffer persecution because of their faith and who suffer for the promotion of justice . . . The salvific mission of the Church in relation to the world must be understood as an integral whole. Though it is spiritual, the mission of the Church involves human promotion even in its temporal aspects. For this reason the mission of the Church cannot be reduced to a monism, no matter how the latter is understood. In this mission there is certainly a clear distinction—but not a separation between the natural and the grace aspects. But duality is not dualism. It is thus necessary to put aside the false and useless oppositions between, for example, the Church's spiritual mission and the "diaconia" for the world.

It will be noted that in the affirmation of the double dimension of the mission of the Church here has been no hint of a correlation of the temporal activity to the laity and the grace activity to the clergy. Such dichotomy of functions has also to be overcome.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

### Text of the Suggestions of the Synod

- I *It is suggested that a pastoral programme be implemented in the particular Churches for the years to come, having as its objective a new, more extensive and deeper knowledge and reception of the Council. This can be attained above all through a new diffusion of the documents themselves, through the publication of studies that explain the documents and bring them closer to the understanding of the faithful. The conciliar doctrine must be proposed in a suitable and continued way by means of conferences and courses in the permanent formation of priests and seminarians, in the formation of men and women religious, and also in the catechesis of adults. Diocesan Synods and other ecclesial conferences can be*

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To the spiritual experience of India this text and the one on dialogue that follows will look poor: nothing is said about the *religious values* found in other traditions (on which cf. AG 3, to cite just one text from Vatican II), nor of the need of the Christian and the Church to *learn* from other traditions.

very useful for the application of the Council. The opportune use of the means of social communication (mass media) is recommended. For a correct understanding and implementation of the Council's doctrine, great help will be had from the reading and practical implementation of what is found in the various Apostolic exhortations, which are, as it were, the fruit of the Ordinary Synods held beginning in 1969.

*II A. Today it is extremely necessary that the Pastors of the Church excel in the witness of holiness. It is necessary already in seminaries and religious houses to give a formation that educates the candidates not only intellectually but also spiritually; they must be seriously introduced to a daily spiritual life (prayer, meditation, the reading of the Bible, the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist). According to what is expressed in the Decree Presbyterorum Ordinis, they should be prepared for the priestly ministry in such a way that they find nourishment for their spiritual life in pastoral activity itself (cf. PO 16). Thus, in the exercise of the ministry they will also be capable of offering the faithful the correct counsel for their spiritual lives. The true renewal of the Institutes of consecrated life must be favoured in every way. But the spirituality of the laity, founded on baptism, must also be promoted. In the first place, it is necessary to promote conjugal spirituality, which is based on the sacrament of marriage and is of great importance for the transmission of the faith to future generations.*

*II B a) Very many have expressed the desire that a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed, that it might be, as it were, a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in the various regions. The presentation of doctrine must be biblical and liturgical. It must be sound doctrine suited to the present life of Christians. The formation of candidates to the priesthood must be looked after in a particular way. In it, the philosophical formation and the manner of teaching theology proposed by the Decree Optatum Totius n. 16 merits attention. (It is recommended that the manuals, besides offering an exposition of sound theology in a scientific and pedagogical manner, be permeated by a true sense of the Church).<sup>10</sup>*

*II B b). The Bishops should not merely correct abuses but should also clearly explain to everyone the theological foundation of the sacramental discipline and of the liturgy.*

*Catecheses must once again become paths leading into liturgical life (mystagogical catecheses), as was the case in the Church's beginnings.*

*Future priests should learn liturgical life from experience and know liturgical theology well.<sup>11</sup>*

10. The bracketed sentence is not found in my Latin version of the document.

11. Corrected version in the light of the Latin text.

**II C.** (a) *Because the new Code of Canon Law, happily promulgated, is of great help to the Latin Church in the application of the Council, the desire is expressed that the Oriental codification be completed as quickly as possible.*

(b) *Since the episcopal conferences are so useful, indeed necessary, in the present-day pastoral work of the Church, it is hoped that the study of their theological "status", and, above all, the problem of their doctrinal authority, might be made explicit in a deeper and more extensive way, keeping in mind what is written in the Conciliar Decree *Christus Dominus* n. 38 and in the Code of Canon Law can. 447 and 753.*

(c) *It is recommended that a study be made to examine whether the principle of subsidiarity in use in human society can be applied to the Church, and to what degree and in what sense such an application can and should be made (cf. Pius XII, AAS 38, 1946, p. 144).*

**II D.** *Since the world is in continual evolution, it is necessary to analyze continually the signs of the times, in order that the Gospel proclamation might be more clearly heard and that the activity of the Church of the salvation of the world might become more intense and efficacious. In this context we ought to consider what is, and how to put into practice*

(a) *the theology of the cross and the paschal mystery in the preaching, the sacraments and the life of the Church of our day;*

(b) *the theory and practice of inculturation, as well as the dialogue with non-Christian religions and with non-believers;*

(c) *the preferential option for the poor;*

(d) *the social doctrine of the Church, as it relates to human promotion in ever new situations.*

**The Call of the Minaret.** By Kenneth Cragg. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books/Ibadan, Nigeria, Daystar Press, 1985. Pp. x-358. US \$ 13.95.

Hardly any book in the English-speaking world has had such an impact on the Christian understanding of and approach to Islam and the contemporary Muslim world as this classic written almost thirty years ago by one of the outstanding pioneers of the Christian interpretation of the faith and religious practice of the Muslims. This work was written in the spirit of the Declaration *Nastra Aetate* of Vatican II ten years before the Council.

Part I, on the contemporary setting, has been completely rewritten and is

now entitled "Islam at the New Century." Chapter 8, "The Call to Service", in the first edition, also has been rewritten. The new heading "The Call to Participation", Cragg remarks, "now seems a more apt description of what the active practice of relationship might mean" (vi).

Neither the author nor this classic work, one among his many other precious books, stand in need of any recommendation, even if some may at times find his diction involved and idiosyncratic. The newly written parts alone seem to me important enough to warrant the purchase of this handsomely produced revised edition, even by those libraries which already possess the first.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

# Correspondence

WOL 3 - 1001

Dear Father,

Fr Aloysius Pieris' article on Inculturation, like all he writes, was fascinating, and, in the best inspirational way, disturbing. I found his all-round insights on inculturation truly enlightening. However, amidst the brilliance, some questions arise—but not with his main thesis, which is persuasive indeed.

(1) Pieris' description of tribal religion is surprisingly inadequate. To describe it as merely cosmic, something not "High", and to suggest that it lacks a "Transphenomenal Reality immanently operative in the cosmos, and soteriologically available within the person", all this bespeaks a very limited, even inaccurate, acquaintance with tribal belief.

(2) In his general thesis (whose main thrust, as was said, seems very acceptable) I'm still uncomfortable about his pre-occupation with ecclesiology ("forging an indigenous ecclesial identity," etc.), even with "religions". Inculturation begins not with an institution, not even with a religion, but with a Man who walked this earth 2000 years ago. He taught and lived and loved (one love that is both "cosmic and meta-cosmic"!); moreover he called people to follow, and promised life with that call—and does so today. All our lines of thought then, and all our solutions, must start from this One. Somehow this all seems a far cry from Pieris' grappling (impressive as it is) with "agapeic and gnostic symbiosis", "theological vandalism", "inculturation" and "inreligionisation," even with East and West!

It seems less important to integrate the Eastern and Western "theological paradigms" he speaks of than to work from the actual and everyday reality of this human being here and now—"in Benaras, Bangkok, or Beijing" (be he or she a Hindu, Buddhist, tribal, or "post-Christian")—confronted today with a living gospel-Christ, who calls him. What happens in that encounter? Inculturation, better incarnation, begins here.

(3) Finally, discipleship (which is what such encounter is about) is something beyond institutions, cultures, "religions"—and discipleship provokes an added imperative: the sharing of this call/meaning/life that Christ gives me with my brothers and sisters. Without proclamation, discipleship would hardly be true, or even just.

Hence I feel Pieris' final and beautiful identification of inculturation and liberation—and the moving examples he gives (Buddhists, Christians, Marxists all working for the "alleviation of poverty structurally imposed")—will be incomplete if they obscure this imperative. Certainly his article does seem strangely silent about it. We are dealing with something that is a polar opposite of "disguised imperialism" ("irreligious means of mass-conversion" as Pieris tellingly puts it). But Christianity, whatever its shape or form (as institution, church, "religion", inculturation, liberation) can never be true to itself nor to all creation, unless it is rooted in basic discipleship, and the proclamation of discipleship . . . the root too of all actual inculturation.

Enough, Father. Thank you for the continued stimulation of your "V".

c/o Catholic Ashram  
Hazaribag, Bihar 825301.

Hans HENDRIKS, S.J.



# Book Reviews

## Biblical Christology

**The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics** (Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today. Vol. II), by Juan Luis SEGUNDO. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books. 1983, pp. vii-230, \$9.95 (paperback).

This is the second in Segundo's projected five volume exploration of "what contribution, if any, Jesus of Nazareth and the tradition stemming from him make to the process of humanization" (p. 13). The first volume, called *Faith and Ideologies* NY Orbis, 1984 laid the methodological groundwork for this ambitious undertaking. The book under review builds on this by examining the significance of the historical Jesus as he is presented to us in the Synoptic Gospel. A third volume will take us on to the interpretation of Jesus given by Paul in his letter to the Romans. A fourth will study a particular interpretation of Jesus in the history of the Church. And Segundo will then, in a concluding fifth volume, present his understanding of Jesus in "modern, evolutionary terms" (p. 41).

Segundo's project is thus a fine example of the "hermeneutical circle" whose mechanism he spelled out for us in his *The Liberation of Theology* (NY, Orbis, 1976). Each of the successive interpretations of Jesus he studies can be seen as moments in a massive hermeneutical circle operating in Christian tradition, which will be, as it were, brought up to date by his concluding presentation of a contemporary understanding of Jesus. As part of the circle this understanding will be continuous with but not slavishly dependant on past interpretations; and it will provide the basis for new understandings that the changing future will bring.

The immense promise of this splendid enterprise has been partially realized in the two parts of it that have already appeared, and specially in the volume under review. Segundo's book is an

excellent one: knowledgeable, carefully argued and stimulating. It strikes a new path in a well trodden field, avoiding the blind alleys of the old and new quests for the historical Jesus, and skirting the hazards of mythologizing Christologies. Indeed Segundo claims to give us an "antichristology"! For, unlike Western Christologies (even those which pretend to be Christologies from below) his antichristology does not take off from the relationship of Jesus to God (the question of his divinity) but from his significance for those who encountered him. The interest that Jesus aroused among those he met was and is paramount. For as Segundo rightly points out: "If people came face to face with a specific, limited human being, ambiguous as everything involved in history is, and came to see him as God or a divine revelation, it was because that human being was of interest, was humanly significant. And if people today arrive at the same final vision of him today, it will only be because the latter fact is verified again: that is, because he is of interest and humanly significant to them" (p. 17).

This approach to Jesus presupposes a historical reading of the Gospels. Segundo undertakes this with the help of three sets of criteria which enable him to distinguish the post-paschal from the pre-paschal and the ecclesial from the pre-ecclesial phases of the tradition, and to evaluate the literary evidence for the historicity of a particular tradition. Segundo's handling of these criteria is laboured. Hermeneutics, not literary criticism, is obviously his strength. Yet the conclusions he reaches are convincing. The Synoptic Gospels reveal the life of Jesus as "a prophetic effort, as a revelation of God, couched in preferably political categories" (p. 85). Indeed Jesus himself significantly chooses the strongly political category of "the Kingdom of God" with which to describe the central content of his proclamation. The religious proclamation of Jesus has thus an inseparable political dimension: "Jesus' revelation of God is simul-

taneously political and religious. He transforms the accustomed notion of God's law, and the corresponding notion of sin, to turn it against the oppressors of his people. To say it once again the more political is the key in which we read and interpret the Synoptic Gospels, the more we discover the profoundly religious character of Jesus' preaching. Along with a new 'politics' goes a new notion of God" (p. 118).

This political dimension of the proclamation of Jesus precludes the total passivity in the face of the Kingdom that existentialist interpretations of the teaching of Jesus continue to demand. The Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus is never a miracle falling on us from high. Rather, Jesus seeks "to place historical causality in the service of the Kingdom", investing all his efforts in this service and inviting his disciples to invest all their efforts in it as well (p. 149). The Resurrection of Jesus as "the invasion of the ultimate, the eschatological, into history" does not annul this historical causality. It is rather "the interruption of a new world of meaning that is offered to human existence" (p. 177).

I have touched on just two points of burning actuality from among the many others which Segundo raises and discusses to offer a taste of the rich fare that his book provides. The book is by no means easy reading. Segundo's argument is close, sometimes repetitious, occasionally tortuous. But the effort of following him through is always worthwhile. It would be too little to say that this book should find a place in every self-respecting theological library. I would like to make it required reading for every student and teacher of theology in India.

G.M. SOARES-PRABHU, S.J.

*Jesus and Judaism*. By E.P. SANDERS  
London, SCM Press, 1985. Pp. xiv-444.  
£15.00 (Limp).

In this work Prof. Sanders seeks to show that there is a causal link between Jesus' life, his death, and the beginning of the Christian movement. For that purpose he examines Jesus' intention in his ministry and his relationship to his

contemporaries in Judaism, as well as the cause of his death, viz. whether Jesus' intention did involve an opposition to Judaism which led to death; at the same time he also examines the cause of the conflict between Christianity and Judaism, viz. whether the split between the Christian movement and Judaism originated during Jesus' lifetime.

Exposing his mode of proceeding the author emphasizes that he takes his starting-point in 'facts' rather than in 'sayings' attributed to Jesus, as the authenticity of these sayings may be problematic. This method involves occasionally that the author has to seek the causes from the effects.

The study consists of three parts. Pt 1. The Restoration of Israel. Three points are considered: Jesus and the Temple (ch. 1); New Temple and Restoration in Jewish literature (ch. 2); Other indications of restoration eschatology (ch. 3) (more particularly: the twelve tribes; the twelve disciples; repentance and judgment).—Pt 2. The Kingdom. The Sayings (ch. 4) (including the problem of their authenticity); Miracles (ch. 5) (their purpose and effect); Sinners (ch. 6) (Jesus' attitude towards them, and table-fellowship; Jesus' promise of the Kingdom for the sinner who believes); The Gentiles (ch. 7) (Jewish view of Gentiles and Jesus' attitude towards them); The Kingdom; conclusion (ch. 8) (the facts and the sayings; will all Israel belong to the Kingdom or only a little flock? the nature of the Kingdom).—Pt 3. Conflict and Death. The Law (ch. 9) (the temple and the Law, divorce, Sabbath, etc.); Opposition and Opponents (ch. 10); The Death of Jesus (ch. 11) (more particularly the cause of the execution and the role of Jewish leaders).—A concluding chapter considers the results; certainties, possibilities and speculations, meaning, especially the connecting link between events and setting in Judaism; the New Testament and Jewish restoration eschatology.

It is impossible to expose here, even briefly, all the points treated in this study and the arguments the author uses to establish his thesis. A few opinions put forward in the book must suffice to give an idea of the author's approach to the subject.

Jesus expected the Kingdom to come in the near future; he and his disciples expected to play a role in the Kingdom. This expectation is to be connected with the hope for Jewish restoration even though the fact is that Jesus' teaching and his preaching material may not be exactly what we would expect of a prophet of restoration. Jesus was not opposed to Jewish nationalism but did not think that national restoration would be achieved by arms.—The Kingdom Jesus visualizes "is like the present world—it has a king, leaders, a temple, and twelve tribes—but it is not just a rearrangement of the present world. God must step in and provide a new temple, the restored people of Israel, and presumably a renewed social order, one in which 'sinners' will have a place" (p. 232).—For Jesus the word 'kingdom' had several meanings, emphasis being put on the kingdom as immediately future, while God was at work in Jesus' own ministry; however, how the two are related is not clear.

Jesus performed miracles as signs of his 'prophetic' mission; yet by themselves the miracles do not give any proof that Jesus was an eschatological prophet as in the first-century Jewish atmosphere there was nothing which would indicate any expectation that the end was at hand.

Since Jesus worked his miracles in favour of the blind, the lame, etc., people who were on the fringe of society, the author is brought to examine also Jesus' relationship to sinners; more particularly his promise of salvation to sinners, undeniably a distinctive characteristic of Jesus' message.

Though Jesus seems to be a Jewish orthodox eschatological prophet, yet he makes no appeal to repentance addressed to the whole of Israel; nor is there any mention of a general judgment (Mt 25 is considered to be unauthentic). Throughout the book emphasis is put on the fact that Jesus speaks of penance and judgment to individuals, not to groups.

As regards the Law, there are no indications that Jesus ever demanded anyone to transgress the Law, except the demand to the one whose father had died: "Let the dead bury their own dead" (Mt 8: 21f). Sanders wants this saying to be taken at its face-value, in the literal sense of the words, as a general principle (not

as a proverbial saying), though a little further he mitigates somewhat his assertion in view of the fact that Jesus emphasizes the need of obeying and honouring one's father and mother.—Jesus did not think that the Law was absolute and final. Jesus offended many people on two grounds, viz. by his attack at the temple and his message that sinners shall enter the kingdom.

In questions regarding the death of Jesus the author appears to be more critical and sceptical than in other questions. Referring to the trial by the Sanhedrin he notes: "we do not know what went on inside" (p. 300), viz. whether Jesus was convicted "at the supposed Sanhedrin trial . . . we share the ignorance of the evangelists", viz. whether there was any formal trial at all; the long trial scene of Matthew and Mark may not be historical; yet we also read that "it remains possible (though not necessary) that there was a hearing by the Sanhedrin and that Scribes were present" (p. 318). If Jesus was condemned on some religious ground it can only be the threat to destroy the temple.—Jesus was executed by the Romans and it is highly probable that he was executed for sedition or treason, as would-be king.

In the concluding chapter the author notes that "the problem here as elsewhere is that we do not have enough comparative material to allow an absolute judgment" (p. 319f) about Jesus' uniqueness. Jesus was not unique in his expectation of a new age, nor in thinking that it would come without arms; he was not unique in performing miracles, or in teaching non-violence, nor in his eschatological hope or in his promise to the outcasts. He was not unique because he saw his own mission as of crucial importance, nor because he believed in the grace of God; "we cannot even say that Jesus was an uniquely good and great man" (p. 320).

Prof. Sanders is aware that "some readers will justly wonder how the Jesus who has been described here is relevant to Christian faith and practice. That is a theological problem into which I am not going to venture, at least not here" (p. 327). "I aim to be only a historian and an exegete. But, since I have criticized so many for having their 'history' and 'exegesis' dictated by theology, the

reader may well wonder how well 'my' Jesus squares with my theological heritage. I explain simply: I am a liberal, modern, secularized Protestant, brought up in a church dominated by low christology and the social gospel. I am proud of the things that religious tradition stands for. I am not bold enough, however, to suppose that Jesus came to establish it, or that he died for the sake of his principles" (p. 334).

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

### Theology

**Heralds of a New Reformation.** By Richard SHAUL. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1984. Pp. xiv-140. \$ 8.95.

In this book a Presbyterian North American theologian gives to his fellow countrymen a basic outline of what liberation theology is about, its origin, its concerns, the conversion it demands and the world of faith it offers. The book ends with a study of the basic communities as a place of hope for the Church. Shaul, however, is no unattached academician. After 18 years of teaching in the Princeton Theological Seminary he (and his wife) realised that the commitment to the poor they had learned in their frequent visits to Latin America did not allow them to remain undisturbed in the prestigious American theological centre. His concern is not just to "explain" the Latin American theology to the First World readers. His involvement in Latin America, where "to be poor is to be subversive" (2), has opened his eyes to the fact that in his own country there are many people and groups who are oppressed, marginalised, deprived, powerless. He decided to join them. Shaul thinks it is a Christian duty not only to be aware of such situations but to take sides in the struggle, effectively, even if it involves financial loss and social descent, as in his case. He also shows how it is only by a real contact with the poor that the rich can acquire a new vision, "from below", that will deepen their faith perspective. The mystery of Jesus is not just that God became man, but that God became a poor man (68), and that God's salvation comes from the death and resurrection of the poor (70). A Christian action can never be "too politicized", because Jesus

died for political reasons (44). His message is not just the value of the person but the affirmation of the worth of the worthless (51). And the belief in the resurrection is authentic only if it is accompanied by a real experience of humiliation, rejection, abandonment and defeat consequent on one's solidarity with the poor (54).

It is possible that some will find the author's critique of the capitalist mentality as an attitude that does not care for the world as a whole somewhat overdone. It would be important perhaps to concentrate more on showing how the wealth of the First World is related to the poverty of the third. Whatever oversimplifications there may be, reading the book means somehow sharing in the conversion experience of a person (actually a couple) who by contact with the poor has been led to a second conversion. In this the book is inspiring and dangerous.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Constructing Local Theologies.** By Robert J. SCHREITER, C.P.P.S. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis* 1985. Pp. xiii-178. \$ 8.95.

Robert J. Schreiter's chief concern in this book is how the Gospel which originated in a definite societal and cultural context can be made to speak the language of an entirely different culture. The answer to this difficult problem leads to the necessity of constructing local theologies.

The author deals with the various aspects of theologizing today, such as different models of local theology, the dynamic interaction between gospel, church and culture in forming a local theology, the study of culture, theology and its context, tradition and Christian identity, the peculiar nature of popular religions, and finally the problems of syncretism and dual religious systems. His handling of these topics is systematic and enlightening.

Commenting upon this book in the Foreword E. Schillebeeckx states that this "book is very important for mis-siologists, but also for any theological enterprise." It is highly recommended to all persons who are interested in theology.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

**Current Moral Questions.** By Felix M. PODIMATTAM, o.f.m. Cap. Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 1984. Pp. vi-67. Rs 15.

This small book is a collection of three articles which had appeared in *Vidya jyoti* (chs. 1 and 2) and *Jeevadhara* (ch. 3). In the first chapter the author regretfully says that even twenty years after Vatican II, moral theology has made little headway in India. The author analyses the causes for this and concludes by stating the three main challenges for moral theologians in India: the challenge of the socio-cultural situation with its value systems, its poverty and its exploitation, the challenge of a population growth which demands a realistic stand on contraception, and the challenge of breaking free from an exaggerated concern with sexual morality to the neglect of the weightier matters of charity. It is heartening to see the author highlight the challenge of the socio-cultural reality. I hope that in future writing, he explicates further the implications of this challenge both for the revision of moral theology and for the moral practice of the church in India.

The second chapter takes, as its context, the fast of Sr Philomen Mary and others in connection with the fishermen's struggle in Kerala, and proceeds to reflect on the morality of fasts unto death. Citing arguments from Christian tradition, the author makes a strong claim for seeing the sacrifice of one's life "as an act of supreme Christian love" rather than as the moral evil of suicide. I missed here arguments from the Indian tradition, particularly the way Gandhiji showed us the moral significance of fast for a worthy cause. In the context of our attempts at developing an Indian (moral) theology this is important.

Chapter three is a plea for the official reconciliation of second marriage Catholics whose first marriage is for all practical purposes dead. While upholding the indissolubility of marriage as a doctrinal fact, the author argues that a pastoral compromise which restores the right of such Catholics to sacramental participation in the Church is an expression of true pastoral responsibility and does not necessarily water down the doctrine. For "allowing pastoral care to be guided by external law, which is admittedly in-

adequate to express the reality of Christian marriage, is tantamount to betraying pastoral responsibility and imposing hardships not always demanded by Christ himself. It would be a travesty of his (the pastor's) pastoral duty as also an unpardonable identification of imperfect positive legislation with the will of God were a pastor to dismiss invariably all second-marriage Catholics as 'public sinners' and hence unworthy of any participation in the life of the Church" (p. 64). The author sees a scandalous contradiction in the Church's "obstinate refusal of sacraments (to such Catholics) while no such refusal is meted out to such 'public sinners' as character assassins, unscrupulous politicians, crooked businessmen, unjust employers, and so on" (p. 63).

Greg D'COSTA, S.J.

**The Restitution of Man.** C.S. Lewis and the Case Against Scientism. By Michael D. AESCHLIMAN. *Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing House*, 983 (Available with The Paternoster Press, Ltd. £ 4.00).

One of the most avidly read apologists of this century is undoubtedly C.S. Lewis, the sale of whose books has run into millions. Aeschliman studies the problem he tackled most resolutely, "scientism" which today, in the words of R. Kroner, is "the creed of those who do not practice science itself but are intoxicated by the triumphs of scientific and even more of technological, discoveries and devices, i.e., the vice of the masses in almost all countries on the earth" (quoted on p. 49). Against this trend that debunks all values, all metaphysics, all deeper realities other than "objective" measurable facts, C.S. Lewis "sought only to add his voice to that of Johnson and Hooker and Aquinas and Aristotle and Plato, in defence of the ancient orthodox tradition of ethics, the great central metaphysical tradition, the *philosophia perennis*" (81), which stands for the "objectivity" of metaphysical and ethical truths as well.

A. studies not only the contribution of Lewis but also the problem itself as it developed in Europe from the 17th and reached its climax in the 19th cen.

tures. He presents many thinkers of the *philosophia perennis* (not to be identified with Aristotelianism or Thomism!), like Kierkegaard, Newman, Leavis, and specially Chesterton, who influenced Lewis considerably and whose thought depth was perhaps concealed by a facetious language. In a sense this book is unashamedly conservative, a defence of authentic and necessary values of any civilization, or as it says, "a defence of the obvious." It wants to restore the solid common sense sanity to a world that from the 18th century has tended to lose it and to worship collective human power in place of God (Toynbee). Our author may treat Communism too lightly by simply calling it "scientism gone political" (75). He does not deal with Eastern civilizations. But the central intuitions of the *philosophia perennis* would surely be found equally in the mainline philosophy of India, as Bede Griffiths, a student of C.S. Lewis from whom he "discovered the meaning of friendship" (14), could attest. It is possibly the theologians' job in India to work out, on the basis of our tradition, a well-argued philosophy for India that would integrate convincingly the sane perceptions of the common man into the world outlook of the modern scientist. This could restore to our students an integral view of the human being and society which are in danger of being lost. In other words, we have to do for ourselves what C.S. Lewis did for his civilization half a century ago.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

## Black Theology

**Christianity without Fetishes. An African Critique and Recapture of Christianity.** By F. EBOUSSI BOULAGA. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books* 1984. Pp. xii-238. \$ 11.95.

This book is mainly about inculturation which, for the author, has to do with very basic world views, basic human values and the sharing of power. For him inculturation involves the identities of Jesus Christ and of every human being. Not only does he raise many problems regarding inculturation in a severe critique and negation of other views, but

he also presents a uniquely different approach to this issue and to the reality of Christianity. In the first section he deals with the evils of transplanted Western middle-class Christianity, and with the African resistance to it. In section two he studies in detail the Christian phenomenon, so that we can see and appreciate it better in the milieu of our own experience. In the third and final section he describes how this Christian experience, which has had such an extraordinary impact on civilizations and religions, is inserted into the world society which is in the process of being created. The author's language and thought are often hard to follow, but listening to him attentively is a rewarding experience. The sharpness of the critique and the intelligence of the author make this a threatening book to read.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

**Black Religion and Black Radicalism. An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People.** By GAYROUD S. WILMORE. Second revised edition, 1983. Pp. xvi-288. \$ 9.95.

**For My People. Black Theology and the Black Church.** By JAMES H. CONE, 1984. Pp. xiv-272. \$ 9.95.

**Black and Reformed. Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition.** By ALLAN BOESAK, 1984. Pp. xix-167. \$ 8.95.

All three books are published by *Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York*, and deal with the black religious experience.

Wilmore's *Black Religion* interprets the rich heritage of the Afro-American people. The author tries to give a comprehensive study of the black Church and religion with its triangular relationship to the United States, Africa and the Caribbean. He affirms that black radicalism binds together the contributing and developmental factors of black religion in the U.S. He also repudiates the critics who undervalue black religion and the black Church's contribution to black radicalism. From a critical analysis of the history of the Afro-American people the author concludes that black pride and power, black nationalism and

pan-Africanism have had no past and have no future without the black Church and black religion. The book is a veritable treasure for everyone interested in the origin of the black churches, black theology and black radicalism.

James H. Cone's *For My People* is a systematic presentation of black theology, as a Christian theologian sees it. The author first introduces the context in which black theology arose and then proceeds with the development of black theology as an attack on white religion. He next presents this black theology as a liberating theology. He analyses critically the strengths and weaknesses in the early development of black theology and the black Church. The rest of the book deals with the necessity for the black Church to dialogue with the Third World, with other minorities in the U.S. and with Marxism. In the last chapter the author briefly presents what he thinks will be the future orientations of black theology. He is not so much interested in the history of the movement. He rather seeks to give a theological interpretation of the civil rights movement and of other race-related issues stemming from it. Hence, this is a valuable book not only for those who are interested in black theology but also for those who want to know more about the Christian gospel and the human struggle for justice.

Allan Boesak's *Black and Reformed* is about black theology in the context of the liberation struggle of the blacks in South Africa. The book is a collection of addresses by the author (cp. his earlier book, VIDYAJYOTI 1984, p. 59), with two exceptions—a letter to the Minister of Justice on Divine Obedience (chapter 3) and an open letter of Bishop Desmond Tutu, now Nobel Prize laureate (chapter 8). L. Sweetman's Forward to the book is a good review. He comments on how Boesak's voice is the voice of the suffering blacks, which leads to a "theology from below", a theology that emerges from the everyday experience of the people. His expression of "a theology from below" does not imply that Allan Boesak dissociates himself from the historical Church. His own title shows how the author wishes to identify himself with the sixteenth century efforts to reform the Church and bring it into subjection to and conformity with the Word of God. Specifically, he wishes to iden-

tify himself with the reformation movement associated with John Calvin. Allan Boesak not only exposes courageously the racism which has for so long been disguised in a Calvinist garb: he also points the way to a revitalized reformed Christianity.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

## Social Questions

**Woman's Image Making and Shaping.** By Frances Maria YASAS and Peter FERNANDO (eds), Pune, Ishvani Kendra, 1985. Pp. 228.

Being a woman today, and an Indian woman at that, does not seem too good a deal for most of us who live in this society that prides itself of being at the threshold of a new electronic and computerised era. The papers which make up this volume were presented at a seminar on the same theme as the title of the book. In its five parts (Conceptual Framework, Religious Perspectives, Social Science Perspectives, Literary and Communication Perspectives and Human Communications Environment), the book aims at creating an awareness of the situation of women in the male-dominated India where so often she is looked down upon. Her humanity cannot develop as most of her energy goes into the heroic task of struggling for survival. The battle for women's liberation is a battle for the right of women to be persons. Women need to distance themselves from men for a while, to gain a certain independence and then enter into dialogue with them. Dialogue is a common task that should be shared by men and women in relation to each other and with reference to the situation of their common lives.

Both structural change and the creation of a new consciousness are important. A change in the image women have of themselves will mean changes in the core institutions of our society. Ways have to be found to evolve a new system where such changed institutions can survive. Many women today live according to the expectations of others. The day this attitude fades out, Indian women will begin reclaiming their lives.

In the Vedas women had a status almost equal to that of men. But already in the Smṛiti times her position declined. In the Muslim tradition, although the Quran says much to alleviate the sufferings of women, theologians did not have clear ideas about women and were not able to obtain a better deal for them. Our laws, even religious laws, are made by men and for men. Women are subservient. This male dominance is operative in the interpretation, if not in the actual text, of the various Scriptures. In spite of these odds, there have been women who have stood up and protested. New rules of hermeneutics need to be developed to help read the religious texts in such a way that they help women to be free.

This book presents also sociological studies on women. The working class women, for instance, appear as marginal in industry, taken on last and thrown out first. Burdened with immediate problems that take up much of their time, women cannot find time to reflect and ask themselves the reasons for this state of affairs. An essay on "The Human Communication Support Environment" brings out how women are not treated as individuals. Their image is that of a sex object. The lesson brought home to them is work hard and expect nothing in return from the world.

For those just beginning to think on the questions raised by the women's liberation movement, this book will be an eye-opener. For others, who are already familiar with the topic it will show how much ground there is to cover.

Sr Noella DE SOUZA

**Catholic Education through the Centuries.** By A. VERSTRAETEN, S.J. *Bangalore, Theological Publications of India*, 1985. Pp. 143.

In the Canon Law the Catholic Church insists on her "right to establish and to direct schools for any field of study or of any kind and grade" (c. 800). To her this work is not only a timely service to society but an essential characteristic of her being. As Pope John Paul II said in 1983 during his visit to the USA, "the very notion of Catholic

education is closely related to the essential mission of the Church to communicate Christ." Her history bears witness to her faithfulness to this mission in the midst of many and serious obstacles.

Fr Verstraeten, who has devoted almost fifty years of his life to education in India and has written quite extensively on it, presents here a brief but very readable account of the Church's educational endeavour through the centuries. As he himself says in the introductory chapter, the purpose is not to produce a comprehensive scholarly work on the history of Catholic education but "to refer to the characteristic features of the Church's educational work at different periods, indicating in particular how the policy of the Church has evolved in conformity with the needs of the times." The actual characteristic features of a Catholic education do not come out very clear in the book, particularly in recent times when in most countries education is largely controlled by the State. However, every page witnesses to the Church's sense of mission.

In keeping with its purpose, the booklet shows in four brief chapters how the immediate objectives of Catholic education changed in the course of time. The Roman Empire, in which Christianity initially grew, was dominated by Hellenic culture and had an efficient system of secular schools. In such a situation the Church merely provided in her catechumens for additional instruction in Christian doctrine, liturgy and way of life, while encouraging learned clergymen and faithful to become teachers in the public schools, thus ensuring that the teaching there did not go against her faith and morals.

Outside the Roman Empire, as in Mesopotamia where education was rather unorganised, and later in the Roman Empire itself following the Barbarian invasions of 5th-6th centuries, the Church became more directly involved in secular education. Monastic, cathedral and parish schools were vigorously promoted and were responsible for the civilisation of those who had been recently christianised. For many centuries this was the only system of schools known in the West and some of the cathedral schools eventually became famous universities in the 13th century.



During the time of the Protestant Reformation, Catholic schools came to be considered as a most effective instrument to prevent the faithful from being misled from the faith. A large number of religious orders, including Jesuits, appeared at this time to take up the challenge of education. Similarly, in the newly discovered lands of the East and the West, education went hand in hand with evangelisation. As in earlier centuries, the aim was to civilize (Westernise?) those who had been or were to be christianised.

Verstraeten makes it a point to demonstrate the Church's concern for the education of the poor throughout her history. This apparently was more obvious earlier than now. Education in monastic and parish schools was free, but even in cathedral schools the poor were not excluded. Some religious orders, like the Oratorians, Piarists and the Brothers of the Christian Schools were particularly involved in this. Education of women and girls too attracted the attention of the Church very early. Eventually, religious congregations of women were established for this specific purpose.

Chapters 6 and 7 take up almost two thirds of the book and give a very comprehensive picture of Catholic education throughout the world from the middle of the 19th century till the present. Some sections might have been relatively familiar to the readers, but there is much about little known countries of Latin America, Africa and the communist countries that is both enlightening and encouraging. On reading especially these two chapters one is struck by the very great importance attached by the Church in her ministry to formal education, notwithstanding serious obstacles faced in various countries, including nationalisation of schools and colleges. In fact, from other sources we learn that the Church is presently involved in the education of almost 38 million boys and girls through her 41,000 kindergartens, 75,000 primary schools, 30,000 secondary schools and an indefinite number of colleges and universities catering to about two million students. The book,

however, does not indicate the "characteristic features" of Catholic schools besides perhaps the teaching of religion to Catholic students. In fact, in the context of the State control of education in most countries and the Church's heavy investment of personnel and finances in it, this is a very important issue.

On the other hand, it is distressing to realise that the education imparted by the missionaries was of the Western type, "with little concern for local customs and traditions." As a result in many countries, especially in Africa, there is today much resentment against the Church herself from the very leaders educated in her schools. It is also unfortunate that in spite of the number and popularity of Catholic institutions outside Europe, "the impact of the Church's educational work on the State system is small."

The concluding chapter summarises the whole account and discusses some of the problems faced by Catholic education: doubts about the scope of education for social transformation, the quality of the teaching staff and the union-mentality among them, the Government control of education, financial constraints, the elitist nature of the student population, etc. Some other problems which the author omitted but which need to be discussed are: the lack of initiative and research in many Catholic institutions, the little concern in the area of education for social consciousness and responsibility, the neglect of in-service staff development, and of appropriate value education programmes for students.

In spite of many printing errors and the rather outdated statistics, this is a precious little book, almost the only one of its kind published in India. It should be read by every one interested in the educational work of the Catholic Church. The modern world owes a debt of gratitude to the Church for her tireless education endeavour and the present booklet is an expression of that gratitude.

Gregory NAIK, S.J.

# Vidyajyoti

## JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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### In This Issue

The Kingdom of God, as announced by Jesus, has moved more and more into the centre of the Church's consciousness in the past years. This has important implications for our understanding of the Church itself and its apostolate. Archbishop Angelo FERNANDES shows how it affects the inner relationships in the Church, for, says he, "a religious theocracy would ill become a community of brothers and sisters." He also suggests, through a ten-point programme, a new orientation for the work of the Church in Asia. His suggestions acquire added relevance in the context of the emerging action groups at the village level, of which we spoke in the December issue of VIDYAJYOTI.

It is a Christian faith conviction that the Kingdom of God is manifested in Jesus Christ. Fr George CHALLITHARA, O.C.D., analyses the new approach to Christology emerging in the writings of E. Schillebeeckx. This approach may be of interest to us in India because it places the believer's *personal experience* of Jesus Christ at the center of the Christological edifice.

The Saints are the finest fruits of God's Reign on earth. Fr E. HAMBYE gives an account of the two new India *beati* which Pope John Paul II is raising to the altar even as this issue goes to the press.

Our Document section puts before our readers two significant statements emerging from the Churches of the Third World. The Bishops of Asia who met last November in a study session, together with other Christians, propose dialogue as an important and urgent task for the Church in Asia. A group of theologians from South Africa published recently an important declaration, called the Kairós document, regarding the stand of the Church in this moment of challenge to the apartheid ideology. We summarise this powerful statement for our readers.

# Prospering God's Rule on Earth

Most Rev. Angelo FERNANDES  
Archbishop of Delhi

**G**OD and God's Kingdom are obviously the "last thing", the corporate destiny of humankind, as well as the goal of the personal salvation of each and all. The subject "The Church at the Service of the Kingdom" is, therefore, of the utmost importance for an understanding of the Church's mission, for its relationship to all peoples and, in fact, to everything in the cosmos. It concerns the essential mission of the Church which is evangelization in all its fulness.

Since decisions in life and actions thereafter stem from one's vision, clear picture of the plan of God for mankind, of Jesus' vision of the Church and Kingdom, are essential for fulfilling our human and Christian vocation. Human destiny, the destiny of the world and the goal of history are all linked together. They are not distinct, one from the other.

The final events are grounded in the redemptive work of Christ and are anticipated in life, in faith, hope and love, in word and sacrament and in the Church itself, the repository of divine glory. Hence the Kingdom might will be defined as the redemptive presence of God actualised through the power of God's reconciling Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

In the present order of divine providence, graced human nature also points to and demands a goal beyond the present. It is, in fact, the Kingdom, God Himself. The endless quest for truth and love down the ages, especially in Asia, reveals a longing for the Infinite, since the world provides no real possibility for ultimate human fulfilment. St Augustine summarised this well in his well-known dictum, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

## Some Biblical Insights into the Kingdom

For the prophets of old, the Kingdom amounts to the hope for a better future, the reign of God, the realisation of the Lordship of

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1. Richard McBrien, *Catholicism*, London, Geoffrey Chapman 1984, p. 1102.

Yahweh, the fulfilment of all that they were longing and waiting for (Is 41:6-9; 32:15; 35:1-7; Hos 2:18; Amos 9:13-14).

For Jesus, who in the Gospels speaks of it as many as 90 times, the Kingdom meant not only the next world, the afterlife, but also the here and now. It was not the elitist concept of the Jews but a feast open to all from East and West, though through a narrow door (Mt 8:11; Lk 13:24).

As a matter of fact, a careful study of the Bible reveals that the Kingdom is the realisation of the Fatherhood of God in his creation and the brotherhood and sisterhood of all his children. The Old Testament does not conceal the fact that this was observed in the breach. Hence, Jesus who came to restore the original plan indicates as favourites of the Kingdom those who had been despised, the oppressed, the persecuted, the poor, the meek and humble, the pure in heart, those seeking justice and peace, in a word, all who figure in the Beatitudes, the Magna Carta of the Kingdom (Mt 5:1-12; Lk 6:20-26).

The parables and discourses of Jesus reveal further such striking features of the Kingdom as concern for persons over law and possessions, forgiveness and healing, love and service extending beyond the frontiers of the chosen few. Sinners too were to find a place in a Kingdom of mercy and compassion (Mk 2:16; Lk 7:34).

What was unique about Jesus is that he associated the love of God and the love of neighbour as part and parcel of the one great commandment of love. Exemplifying this to the hilt, he was able to say: "Love one another as I have loved you."

The criterion for entry into the Kingdom was announced clearly as a "change of heart," a conversion, a seeking first of God's Kingdom (Mt 6:25), become a disciple, a child of God, the doing of the Will of God at all times, also at the level of community relations. "Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done."

Jesus never defined the Kingdom, but he described his Father's reign in a variety of ways and backed up his preaching by signs and wonders to show that the Kingdom had come in his person (Lk 11:20; Mt 11:14). Its final outcome was the Father's secret, but we are encouraged to pray and live for it.

### **The Vicissitudes of Kingdom Theology**

The story of the Kingdom theology is a tale of a constant dialectic

tic, as one aspect or the other was highlighted in the course of the centuries. One recurring tension was between the Kingdom as a gift from God and the human effort to build it. In the days of Jesus, the Jews of his time sought to identify the Kingdom with the liberation of Israel from the yoke of Rome.

Whereas Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom, the early Church proclaimed Jesus as the personification of the Kingdom.

The Fathers of the first centuries emphasised the Lordship of Jesus, the imminence of the Kingdom and its interior or spiritual character. Later on, Augustine, Gregory the Great and others identified the Kingdom with the Church. Political leaders, meanwhile, sought to equate the state with the Kingdom. The climax came with Charlemagne identifying it with the Holy Roman Empire, a notion vigorously rejected by Pope Boniface VIII in 1303.

By the eighteenth century, the establishment of human society on moral principles came to be regarded as God's Kingdom. Emmanuel Kant labelled it "an ethical commonwealth", Hegel "the completion of history", Karl Marx "a classless society". In every case, the Kingdom was understood to be the product of human initiative.

The Kingdom of God became the central idea of Christianity in the nineteenth century. The debate now turned on whether the Kingdom was a matter of the future, and God's act alone, or a thing of the past, the "hour of decision" experienced anew by each individual, or a matter of the present in which we decide for or against God.

For Catholic theologians of our time, the Kingdom is past, present and future. With a linear view of history, they see Creation, the Christ-Event and the Second Coming as interconnected, the role of the Church as being limited to the "interim" period between the first and second Coming. Modern scholars also view the Kingdom as the product, both of divine initiative and human collaboration. The human effort is understood to include the political realm as inherent to the building of the Kingdom.

Some, like Hans Küng, warn us against a false secularising of the Kingdom, while others, like Gutierrez, emphasise that the struggle for justice and liberation is very much a demand of the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> So did the Synod of 1971, on "Justice in the World".

The Catholic Church has never officially defined the meaning of

2. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

the Kingdom of God. Inferences have, therefore, to be drawn from the Church's teaching on grace, original sin and Jesus Christ.

There are a lot of references to the Kingdom, however, in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The Kingdom once again becomes the centre of the Church's proclamation, as it was with Jesus himself. The document on the Church in the modern world describes the Kingdom as "the consummation of the earth and humanity"; "a new dwelling place" and a "new earth where justice will abide"; a "new age"; a reality of "truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace." The signs of God's growing rule on earth are the values of "human dignity, brotherhood and freedom". Pope Paul VI goes on to add "liberation from sin and the Evil One" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*). The Synod of 1983 on Reconciliation did the same.

### A Holistic Concept of the Church

In these decades after the Council, tensions have surfaced in the Church between priests and people, the clergy among themselves, bishops and priests, theologians and pastors, largely because of differences of perception on the meaning of the Church and the mission of the Body of Christians to the world.

In the days of yore, tensions in rectories between pastors and their assistants stemmed from position and power. This was so even though both shared the same ecclesiology. After Vatican II, such conflicts as arise derive mainly from different perceptions of what it means to be the Church, what the Church is for, and the practical implications thereof, even as to the allocation of resources for different ministries.

There are three models of the Church operating in the minds of Christians today at all levels. There is the Institutional model, the Community model and the Servant model.

In the first, the Church is seen primarily as a traditional, hierarchical *institution*, or a visible society which mediates salvation through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments. Decision making is largely in the hands of the Pope and the Bishops and/or the Roman Curia and the diocesan chancery office! The Church is doubtless more than an institutional reality, but this model seems to overlook or softpedal the prophetic dimension of Christianity. Political liberals and the new rightists in the Church are strong protagonists of this model.

The second model sees the Church as a *community of believers*, or the People of God, the image chosen by the Council and assimilated, to some extent, by a fair number of people. Some use this model to serve the first, insisting, for instance, that bishops also belong to the People of God! The Community model has done much to promote and sustain personal growth through interpersonal relationships. However, it has sometimes been institutionally naive in imagining the Church can be one happy family with no structures and leaders—just a free-wheeling fellowship of equals!

The third model is that of the Church as an agent of social change, or a *Servant Church*. It is not concerned about being an agent of salvation, where the Word is preached and the Sacraments administered, or a community where Christ is encountered and people encounter one another; it is to be a group or agency charged with improving the quality of life in society.

All of us have experienced, in some measure, the tendencies springing from such ecclesiologies and the tensions that surface when one is over-stressed to the detriment of the others. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that in our understanding of the Church we incorporate the distinctive strengths of all three models without accepting their individual weaknesses, especially their common tendency to "absolutize" themselves, that is, to equate the whole mystery of the Church with their own particular perspective. The solution of the tensions lies in doing justice to all three models. Only then can we be faithful to the full range of the Church's mission. The Church, like Jesus himself, is for the sake of the Kingdom. It must never be forgotten that the Kingdom, God's rule on earth, the doing of His Will at all times and in everything, is the only absolute. In other words, the Kingdom must always be understood as an invitation from God asking us to say "yes" to and participate in His plan of sharing His life, or to come to Him in love, as a child to its Father. On our part, it means a response of love, a willing acceptance, a gracious "yes". "Behold, Lord, we come". Each and every human life is a series of interventions inviting such a response of love.

An attempt to do justice to the three models will project the Church as a structured or institutionalized community of the Body of Christians who are called by God the Father to acknowledge the lordship of Jesus the Son in word and sacrament, in witness and service and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to collaborate with

Jesus' saving mission for the sake of the Kingdom of God throughout all mankind.

As Paul VI proclaimed towards the end of the Council, "the Church in this world is not an end in itself; it is at the service of all men." It is not enough, then, that as many persons as possible be baptized: an effort must be made to introduce all persons without distinction into the Kingdom, even though they do not enter the visible Church. Building *human communities* according to Kingdom values is also part of the Church's mandate.

### The Kingdom Interrogates the Church

We are wont to describe the mission of the Church around the ideas of *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. The Church has to *proclaim* in Word and in Sacrament the definitive arrival of the Kingdom in Jesus, to offer itself as a sign or test-case of its own proclamation, i.e., to be a People transformed by the Spirit into a *community* of faith, hope, love, freedom and truthfulness; and thirdly, to enable and facilitate the coming of the Reign of God through *service*, both within the community of faith and in the world at large.

Faced with the idea of the Kingdom, there emerges a fresh call to responsibility and renewal within the Church with all the changes in attitudes this might entail. Perhaps we have already added *martyrion*, *witness*, to the previous trilogy of proclamation, fellowship and service. Be that as it may, we have now to explore further the implications of the relationship between Kingdom and Church.

The Kingdom, as has been stated earlier, is the Reign of God, the acceptance of God's Will and saving Rule, a network of human relations with God, other People and Nature.<sup>3</sup>

Vatican II chose a felicitous formula to relate Church and Kingdom when it used the phrase *Sign and Sacrament* (LG 9-48; GS 42-45). This means that the Church exists for another Reality. And that Reality is precisely the Kingdom-humanity. The Church is a "universal sacrament of salvation" (LG 48); as Paul VI often repeated, the Church is "at the service of mankind." The Church exists *IN* and *FOR* the Kingdom and not for itself (Col 1:15-19 and 1 Cor 15:24-28). The Parables (Mt 13) all emphasise the point. Matthew sees the Final Judgement in terms of living the Kingdom values and inheriting the

3. D.F. HOXBY, *Studies towards a Theology of the Kingdom*, p. 16.



Kingdom (Mt 25). The Book of Revelation, in its famous twenty-first chapter on a new heaven and a new earth, proclaims the same message.

However, the Kingdom also limits the Church. The Church must work for its values and establish them. The Church is provisional, temporary, interim, between the first and second Coming; the Reign is the final event at the end of time. The Kingdom is an all-powerful act of God Himself. The Church must make no attempt to create it by itself, but pray and live for its coming. A religious theocracy would ill become a community of brothers and sisters. Instead of being a worldly power, the Church must become more and more the evangelical conscience of the world. The Church must remain humble, aware that it is made up of sinful members; the Reign is a saving event for sinners.

The Kingdom demands a radical decision for God. The Church must make similar demands with important consequences for itself and its mission. This is especially true in its witness to Justice and Love. "It has been too long forgotten that God desires all men to be saved, body and soul; too long taken for granted that a privileged group of well-fed people should exist side by side with multitudes of people dying of hunger. Christians can no longer tolerate this."<sup>4</sup> Those who know themselves to be part of the Kingdom, witness to its message and try to live by its standards, experience in their lives a tension between the "already" and the "not yet" and between the ambiguity of the world and human achievements as they relate to the Kingdom.

### **The Essentials of the Kingdom**

Putting aside theological categories, let us take a look at the membership of the Kingdom. It is made up of all on earth who accept the sovereignty of God, obey Him in their conscience, which is His voice, whether they know Jesus conceptually or not. The Church is part of the Kingdom; another part is outside its visible confines.

God distributes His grace freely. Every "yes" to conscience is a recognition of God's sovereignty. In fact, the fundamental disposition of the Kingdom of God is fidelity to the voice of conscience as the voice of God.

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4. Melbourne Conference 1980, Position Paper I, Colombo, Ecumenical Institute, p. 27.

The Council summarizes the fundamental content of a normal conscience in two principal values—the love of God and the love of neighbour (GS 16). In a conscience formed in a merely human way, this twofold precept does not have the perfection which it acquires through revelation: but it can be understood by everyone in a normal situation, to an extent sufficient for salvation.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the relationship with God, history reveals the birth and existence of many religions which, says the Council, contain “seeds of the Word”. If they are followed in good faith, according to each one’s concrete circumstances, they can be a practical way sufficient to enter and remain in the Kingdom.

The other fundamental aspect of the Kingdom, *fraternal love*, can be manifested and is being expressed in thousands of different ways, e.g., in action for social justice or human development or politics or peace—all that goes to make life more truly human or to improve the quality of life in society. Jesus Himself, in the scene of the final judgement, points to *love*, to opening oneself to something other than self, which can be the Absolute, or the neighbour as the concrete and most striking feature of the Kingdom.

This love has to be put to work also at national and global levels through a proper marshalling of the earth’s resources. While “obedience to conscience” is essential, the way of *fraternal love* is more understandable and more appealing. Numerically speaking, it has the largest number of followers who qualify for the Kingdom! Every authentic sign of love should be greeted with cordiality and friendship. “No one could tell me where my soul might be. I searched for God and he eluded me; I sought my brother out, and found all three” (Ernest Crosby).

The values of the Kingdom will always be demanded of us, only to the extent that the sincere conscience presents them to each person as a duty. Finally, man “will be judged” according to his conscience (GS 16) as he has been able to form it in good will in his particular circumstances.

It is this universal Kingdom of God, served by the Church, which ought to increase gradually until the end of history (1 Cor 15: 21-27). Some signs of God’s increasing reign on earth are the growth of “human dignity, brotherhood and freedom”, whether or not there

5. Riccardo LOMBARDI, *Information News Letter M.B.W.*, no. 3, July 1976, p. 5.

is explicit reference to God. The Father knows and understands his children. The Eastern anaphoras, e.g., that of St Serapion, delight in calling upon God under the lovely name of "Friend of men". On this earth, the Kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns, it will enter into its perfection (GS 39). Then God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).

### **The Process at Work: A Ten-Point Action Programme**

While the visible Church has been growing and expanding in its Abba experience, its interior life of holiness and grace—the best contribution to the Kingdom—, and likewise in its outreach of proclamation, witness, love and service, the Kingdom outside the Church has also been developing, even among people who know nothing about the Church.

The Church-centred and Kingdom-centred approaches lead to two different perceptions and orientations of the Christian mission. In the former, the goal of mission is the Church, and convert-making is made out to be the main task. In the latter, the goal of mission is the building of human communities according to the values of the Kingdom, with fidelity to conscience and unselfish love as foundational. The obstacles to be surmounted will be many and formidable, stemming largely from human selfishness at all levels. The challenge is all the greater as the task is the nobler.

Understanding the claims of the Kingdom, the Church is called upon to assume a new and great responsibility, rooted in its experience of the divine. It has to give up any preoccupation with itself and place itself unreservedly and wholeheartedly at the service of the entire human race.

1. *Preaching the Kingdom* should be a new and high priority. Doing so with the baptized offers an opportunity to explain the essence of Christianity which is love—the extraordinary, wonderful, even prodigal love of God for his people and the intimate family relationship between the Father and his children. The awareness of God, his familiar Presence, grows and sparkles as we recognize in a look or a gesture, as a friend would, the sign of His creative attention and oneness with us. This he does in a language particular to each of us. We must learn his alphabet, recognize and understand it.<sup>6</sup> The

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6. L.J. SUENENS. *A New Pentecost*, New York, Seabury Press 1975, p. 69.

preaching of the Good News leads towards a more intense union with God and all his children. But what should not be missed is making the proclamation prophetic. It is not enough to say and teach "Jesus is Lord": it must be added that Jesus is not really acknowledged here and now if there is a gap between the values of the gospel and the human situation we have created. In the current situation, at local and global levels, the long-drawn-out merciless exploitation of the weak and the poor by the powerful and rich demands that we work for the liberation of the oppressed as an essential and indispensable dimension of the furtherance of the Kingdom of God within each person and in society as a whole. Charismatic renewal groups also need to keep this in mind. Anybody who preaches the Kingdom increases Christian responsibility for the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

2. *A Kingdom Task Force.* Given the importance of the matter, a special corps of persons could be trained for the spreading of the Kingdom in its minimal and universal dimensions. Is this to be the future call particularly to lay people who, by and large, are more in touch with persons of other faiths and with the world? Any such training should focus heavily on helping one and all to live responsibly, i.e., helping to *form the conscience* and to stimulate the utmost fidelity to it. How many of the baptized are really in the Kingdom, living and enjoying the life of God? Responsible living and the responsible use of time, talent and treasure need to receive the highest priority. The wise use of stillness and silence should form part of the training programme.

3. *Spreading love and fraternity* among Christians and others will, in effect, prosper eternal salvation, since this is the Kingdom's principal value. The supreme judge has said as much in the scene of the last judgement. In other words, to teach people how to love is a very concrete and admirable catechumenate worthy of receiving active and speedy attention. We should not fight shy of the Trinitarian love, for that is what the Kingdom love is.

Today more than ever before, because "of the closer bonds of human interdependence and their spread over the whole world, we are witnessing a widening role of the common good, which is the sum total of social conditions" (GS 26). "Technical progress is of less value than advances towards greater justice, wider brotherhood, and a more humane social environment" (GS 35). To transform the entire

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7. Riccardo LOMBARDI, *Church and Kingdom of God*, Manila, East Asian Pastoral Institute 1977, p. 149.

world into the Kingdom of God, *human relationships need to be healed and cemented through the fundamental principle of fraternity* (GS 24). The role of the Church in all this is to be a leaven, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God (GS 40).

4. *The Practice of Dialogue.* The world is becoming unified and we have the duty of building a better world based upon truth, freedom, justice and love. We are witnessing the birth of a new humanism in which man is defined, first of all, by his responsibility toward his brothers and toward history (GS 55).

In his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI recommended honest and sincere *dialogue* as a major contribution towards the construction of the Kingdom. Dialogue within the Church to foster a new liberty, new communion and a new co-responsibility that is more deeply incarnate. Dialogue also with every religion and every person, to the ends of the earth.<sup>7</sup> Not for nothing did the Council concentrate on dialogue with all men (GS 92) as a means to construct a better world and lead it to its goal in Christ (GS 93).

Dialogue could be an effective programme for the indifferent non-practising Christian in East and West, if made to centre on the minimal demands of the Kingdom—fidelity to conscience and unselfish love. A better practice of fraternal love may be the only practical means to redirect people towards their salvation, even while it enables the Church to discharge its function of promoting the Kingdom of God everywhere. For the de-Christianized masses, this may be a providential godsend.

5. *Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue.* It is obvious that the Church which is part of the Kingdom should be at pains to dialogue with the other part of the Kingdom which comprises for the most part people of other religions (LG 16). "We must bear in mind that the Church is not God's sole agent of evangelization. In fact, all men of good will are unwitting collaborators with us in promoting Gospel values."<sup>8</sup> Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue are imperatives of the Kingdom and not luxuries to be confined to theological elites! If not re-examined from the stand-point of the people in the pews, the present stalemate will continue. It seems an urgent demand of the Kingdom that dialogue centres be set up in

8. Angelo FERNANDES, "Evangelization and the Modern World", *Synod Intervention* 1974.

parishes. The new Canon Law reminds us that the care of non-Christians and non-believers, etc., is part of parish responsibility. The first step is to create a climate of trust and frankness. The followers of non-Christian religions are, in the words of John Paul II in *Redemptor Homini*, "the effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body." For, as he says elsewhere, "the Holy Spirit is mysteriously present in non-Christian religions and cultures."

Concerning the *recognition due to God*, there is scope for praying together, for sharing religious experience, for engaging in the practice of meditation, for investigating the treasures of spirituality, and for experiences about the fact of conscience, the sense of remorse, the satisfaction of the accomplished good, etc. If we cannot as yet think alike in all things, we can at least love alike. Along the line of fostering *the love of neighbour*, the occasions can be numberless, especially in respect of the common good.

Public opinion today has already been aroused against oppression, racial discrimination, colonialism, torture, ill-distributed riches, abuse of power, dictatorship, exploitation, hypocrisy, totalitarianism and war.<sup>9</sup> The Church can ill afford to be an idle spectator.

Working together on human issues is an ideal starting-point for dialogue. It could take the form of joint social action to continue to break down barriers of discrimination based on race, economic class, sex, religion or whatever. Love of neighbour is intimately bound up with this struggle. Work for human dignity, equality and peace is the kind of imperative most likely to draw a willing response from persons of all living faiths. This has already been proved by the fifteen years of experience of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. According to the Vatican Council, what all aspire to is a "renewed humanity, penetrated with brotherly love, sincerity and a peaceful spirit."

6. *Secular Ecumenism*. We should likewise cooperate with agencies, Christian or not, engaged in bringing about these changes in world structures that are necessary for the betterment of all life for all men. It is only by transforming society that we shall be able effectively to reach out to the individual persons within it. Gospelling the milieu is certainly a contribution to the building of the Kingdom. Macro-evangelization, the gospelling of international

9. LOMBARDI, *ibid.*, p. 171.

structures, is a high priority of the Kingdom, especially for the Churches in so-called developed countries, most of whom have a Christian background. Since many of the partners in such a dialogue are secular humanists, such activity has sometimes been described as "secular ecumenism."<sup>10</sup>

7. *Lay Ministers for the Kingdom.* An alternative challenge of commitment in the Church is to entrust to *lay people* the ministry of proclaiming the universal Kingdom, the more so as many of its facets have more to do with them than with the clergy. Lay people are, in fact, better placed for the work than Church-oriented clerics and religious. They are scattered among all the people and are in daily contact with them. Practical programmes could be organised to assist them in promoting the Kingdom values in the family, in their professional life and in society in general. More basically, the lay people concerned should themselves be seized of Gospel values, be models of fidelity, relate to God as children to their Father, as true disciples of Jesus, and programme their lives towards selfless love and service to others. They will then be sharing a lived experience when they proclaim the Kingdom to others.

The witness of a holy life is more important than anything else. And this has to do with *daily life as a "spiritual exercise"* from within which God is calling us forward.

It is not without significance that the theology of the Kingdom should coincide with the new world and service-oriented lay spirituality so emphasised by Vatican II. "The laity, by their very vocation, seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God" (LG 31). Everything that happens to us is meant to teach us how to become holy, to live the Kingdom, to fulfil the Will of God.

The ecclesial life of our people must continue to grow and flourish. Statistics for Baptism and Communion are not unimportant; they are signs of the Kingdom of God. But no less important is the spread of saving love in the home and in society.

8. *Youthful Apostles of Love.* Hopefully, it will be the youthful Christians of Asia who will learn the way of love and become apostles of the Kingdom and of total salvation. They are best fitted to be the inspirational, authentic, cheerful missionaries of the future, bringing "hope" to a confused and joyless world. They would be the best

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10. FERNANDES, *Ibid.*

announcers of the Good News of the Kingdom, beginning with two essential attributes: complete docility to a well-formed conscience and mutual understanding and *fraternity* in a pluralistic world that needs these more than the desert needs water.

Young people who are cheerful witnesses to Christ's devotion to the Father and unconditional love of his brothers and sisters will be the best bearers of the Good News, and partners of the glorified Lord still present and active in his Church through his Spirit. Their interest in the Charismatic renewal and in the knowledge of the Scriptures are signs which the Church should not ignore. The world will be saved when the conscience prevails and Love invades it and carries all along towards a new world order based on society's four pillars of truth, freedom, justice and love.

9. *An Oriental Package.* The new universalism enshrined in the proclamation of the Kingdom will strike a responsive chord with the new generations growing up in Asia (who do not know and have not experienced colonialism) when certain Gospel values, akin to Oriental traditions and sensibilities, stand out to advantage. Such are *poverty* of spirit and *simplicity* of life-style, *authenticity*, utter truthfulness and integrity, cost what it may; *wisdom*, the reflection of the eternal light rather than a parade of learning and intellectual attainments, and *contemplation* or a contemplative orientation of the whole of life.

Technology needs mysticism, said Bergson long ago, and Teilhard de Chardin considered mysticism to be the only way of synthesizing the riches accumulated by other forms of activity. He called it the "science of Christ running through all things."<sup>11</sup>

The "faith in man" inherent in the new humanism needs to be combined with a "sense of the earth" and a "sense of the transcendent." True contemplation goes beyond union with God "in singleness" or even loving God beyond all things to loving God "in and through all things."

If we allow God to take hold of us more and more, possess us as fire possesses the burning log, then we will give off light and heat to the whole world, even though the source be completely hidden.<sup>12</sup> It is the providing of this spiritual energy to maturing humanity's self-

11. Ursula King, *Towards a New Mysticism*, London, Collins 1980, p. 32.

12. Ruth Burrows, "Before the Living God", quoted in *To Believe in Jesus*, Denville, New Jersey, Dimension Books 1981, p. 96.



evolution and growth that is expected of religion and the Church today. Religion then becomes a radiant centre of energy and love linked to a dynamic mysticism of action. "Let us leave the surface and without leaving the world, plunge into God."

10. *The Call to Discipleship and Childhood.* Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness. . . . If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:12.31).

The central question of Christianity which keeps recurring as the Risen Lord leads us during the liturgical year is: "Who do men say that I am?"

As the Gospels show, discipleship is a special and close relationship with Jesus (Mk 4:34; 9:2-8). The disciples are called by Jesus, taught by him and follow him. They are called to appreciate both his transfiguration and his cross. They are to become the new family of the Lord. The centrality of Jesus is based on a relationship of faith. The recognition of who Jesus is brings peace, healing and effective ministry. It also implies a dedication to the fellowship which his disciples are expected to experience among themselves and to prosper for their mission and ministry and for the upbuilding of the community. It is a fellowship in service and suffering for the sake of the Kingdom of God.<sup>13</sup>

When we consciously choose in faith to take seriously the reality of Jesus Christ and to base our conduct on his teaching, we experience our relatedness to God.<sup>14</sup>

Anyone who is not engaged in some way or another—through significant listening, reading or deep personal reflection—in "studying" the mind and heart of Christ is not actually a disciple. Discipleship is only authentic in the measure that Jesus is teaching us himself. Doubtless we are disciples "in" the Church and disciples of the Jesus who teaches through his Church. But to be disciples at all we have to learn from Christ ourselves, personally and individually. This means to learn at the feet of Jesus through deep reflective prayer as well as through everything else. "The knowledge of God begins and ends in personal encounter with the living God. He does not

13. Leonard DOOHAN, "Discipleship in Mark" in *Scripture in Church*, Vol. 58, Dublin, Dominican Publications 1985, p. 230 and *passim*.

14. David KNIGHT, *First Steps in Christian Discipleship*, Denzville, N.J., Dimension Books 1982, p. 31.

send messages from outer space, but meets his people in a living and sometimes disconcerting relationship."<sup>15</sup>

Every Christian should make it a point to reflect upon his life in the light of the faith. The key to the meaning of life lies there. With full trust he should cast his care upon the Lord, hand over, surrender himself so that God can flood his entire being. This secret, intimate relationship and the peace and joy resulting therefrom should be proclaimed to all the world. It is the experience of "good news" that is meant to be shared with others.

The upshot of all this is to remind ourselves that nothing is more important for ourselves and the Kingdom than such a strong, loving, dynamic relationship with the Lord. If this is missing, none of the other measures will be fully effective, even if attempted.

### The Person of Jesus

The interests of the Kingdom must not have more weight than the person of the leader, Jesus Christ. It is on Him personally our lives must be fully staked without compensation, without consolation and at the risk of all we have. It is not a matter of choosing a life, noble though that may be; it is a matter of choosing a person. The person of Jesus sums up the riches of the Kingdom and all the motives for commitment to it—the Kingdom present, growing and to come.

And the real challenge of Jesus is not a matter of intelligence but, ultimately, a challenge to give up an old vision and to accept a new one. It is a matter of radical faith and profound trust, a life-giving, joyful vision that makes for transformation of life. But making the vision of Jesus one's own is never really a completed process. We too have to grow in wisdom, age and grace—to *become* children of God in spirit and in truth.

After a near-sighted young man was, through the aid of the right lenses, able to see and enjoy the blue skies, the white clouds, the street signs and the greenery all around, he said to the doctor, "This is the second most beautiful experience of my whole life." "And what was the first?" asked the doctor. The young man replied, "The day I came to believe in Jesus. When I at last took him seriously and saw that God is truly my Father, when I saw that this is really God's beautiful world, when I saw myself as a child of the

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15. R.T. FRANCE, *The Living God*, London, Inter-Varsity Press 1972, p. 53.

heart of God and felt the warmth of his love; when I saw others as my brothers and sisters in the human family of our Father—this was the great turning point, the most transforming and beautiful experience of my whole life. It was like the beginning of a new life. I know what St Paul means when we says that faith makes us a brand new creation."<sup>16</sup>

Such faith is for the open-minded and the brave-hearted. Such faith is for those who are willing to wager everything on Jesus. But this one thing is certain. To the extent that we really understand and live the vision of Jesus about the Father's plan for all his children, to that extent we will be much more free to live, to grow and to experience the fulness of life and joy that Jesus hold out to us. "I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11).

### Conclusion

The goal of creation and redemption is not the Church but the Kingdom, the Reign and Rule of God. The Church is the anticipatory sign of the Kingdom. It is always moving toward the Kingdom as its goal. God brings about the Kingdom; the Church is devoted entirely to its service.

"Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of God: 'The time has come; the Kingdom of God is upon you; repent and believe the Gospel' " (Mk 1:14). "Go out all over the world and preach the Gospel to the whole of creation, making disciples of all nations. . . ." and "behold, I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world." ". . . And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself. . . ." "I shall indeed be with you soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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16. John POWELL, *The Christian Vision*, Allen, Texas, Argus Communications 1984, p. 37.

# Christology in a New Key

George CHALLITHARA, C.C.D.\*



**T**HE confession of Jesus of Nazareth as Son of God, Lord and Christ, is the hallmark of Christianity and its life-blood. This belief lies at the root not only of the New Testament but also of the whole of the life of Christianity throughout the ages. The New Testament gives expression to this conviction of the identity of the "Jesus of the earthly ministry" with the heavenly Son of God by means of titles, kerygmatic formulas and narratives. This New Testament faith in Jesus as Christ and Son of God has been constant in the two thousand years of Christian history. But the way it was expressed has always been internally shaped and coloured by the human concerns of each cultural epoch, as people sought for salvation and wholeness from God in Christ in relation to their own deepest and most intimate but widely-shared interests and hopes.

Evidently, then, Christology was not something the Christian community fell into; it was something it began with. As soon as the disciples experienced Jesus as risen from the dead and thereby claimed him as uniquely touched by the life of God, they set about the task of discerning the implications of Jesus' person and mission for the world in which they lived. Throughout its history, the Church, either through its own initiative or, more frequently, under the influence of cultural and historical changes, had to re-think and re-articulate its most fundamental beliefs. Every Christian generation has had the task of contributing its own reflection to the mystery of Christ. But, while in the past the reflection has followed well-trodden paths, today the Christological question is being asked in a more radical manner. Though our faith has been ever the same, still it has also regularly put forth different expressions to meet the exigencies of different times. A new age of theology brings with it new expressions no less in Christology than in other areas of belief.

Christological thought is characterized in our contemporary era by a wide variety of approaches to the assertions about Jesus within

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our heritage, and such approaches go far beyond polishing our images or touching on one or other timely issues. The new approaches have been brought about by a curious coincidence of different factors. The post-Enlightenment critical consciousness, changes in our understanding of man, and strong existential concerns about our own humanity impinge strongly upon any reformulation of Christology in our age.

The emergence of critical consciousness since the Enlightenment has caused us to relativize our notions about the process of understanding and to become more sensitive to the variety of hermeneutical approaches and their implications for dealing with our cultural traditions. On the other hand, the collapse of much of traditional metaphysics as an acceptable (or at least unquestioned) way of articulating our world of meaning has pushed the doctrine of man into the centre of our consciousness. Moreover, strong existential concerns constantly impinge upon our attempts at formulating a particular doctrine of man. The crisis in our understanding of man has thus turned us back to Jesus, to explore his significance as a paradigm for our own humanity and, in turn, it raises new questions about His!

As these factors weigh heavily upon current Christology, a heightened critical and historical consciousness has made us re-acquaint ourselves with the plurality of Christologies that existed in the early period of the church. As a consequence, it has come to be accepted that the days are now over when Christology could be done solely within certain dogmatic parameters laid down by the Council of Chalcedon.

When the two factors—a search for a vision of man and critical consciousness—combine, Christology as such has no choice but to face reformulation. This has manifested itself particularly in questions of meaning directed to the base of Christology: how can a historical occurrence such as Jesus of Nazareth claim universal significance across time and cultures? How can a culturally conditioned human existence be a paradigm of humanity for all peoples? In these times when literally nothing is left unquestioned it is not enough merely to assume or to assert the importance of Jesus Christ. Instead, the reality of Jesus, like everything else, must be examined, explained and vindicated. The historical foundations and the theological content of the mystery of Jesus Christ must be critically assessed and worked out in the light of modern developments.

This is the task that Schillebeeckx, one of the most outstanding

and dynamic Catholic theologians, has undertaken in his Christological approach, especially in his *Jezus-boeken*.<sup>1</sup> He faces the challenge of speaking about Jesus' significance in a way that the "message" can be heard in our different culture and changed time. Schillebeeckx has dared to raise the question of Jesus and of Christ in the radically secular context of "an age which in most—if not all—sectors of its life appears to do without God."<sup>2</sup> Such an age, Schillebeeckx wrote, "requires us to speak about God in a way that is different from our past speaking about Him."<sup>3</sup>

The first Christians came to grips with Jesus' identity from within the horizons of interpretation provided by their religious and cultural heritage, and so constructed the 'Christologies' which we find in the New Testament. But our situation is different: our literary, symbolic and philosophical resources, the concrete forms of our experience of suffering, of death, of lack of meaning, are, in many respects, specific to our concrete situation. Therefore, the cultural and religious horizons within which we confront the gospel question "Who do you say that I am?" are not those of the first or of any subsequent generations of Christian believers. It follows that the way in which we "seek to give an account of the hope that is in us" will not, and cannot, be identical—in terms of the words, images and concepts that we use, or the practical decisions that we take—with that of our fathers in the faith. Each generation of Christians has to undertake the task anew—the practical task of Christian faith and discipleship, and not simply the theoretical task of seeking appropriate linguistic and conceptual expressions for our hope.

Schillebeeckx therefore insists that Christianity originated not with the doctrine but with "an experience of Jesus" which then, over a period of time, took on certain forms. Furthermore, as serious consideration is given to experience in his Christological work, he has felt free to change interpretative frameworks in his own quest for the significance of Jesus today and to modify them when necessary. The experience itself is quite simply always more important than the

1. By the Dutch term, "Jezus-boeken", we mean the two volumes of E. SCHILLEBEECKX's projected trilogy: 1. *Jesus. An Experiment in Christology*, Eng. Tr. London, Collins, 1979, and 2. *Christ. The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, Eng. Tr. London, SCM Press, 1980. Both should be counted as an essential part of the "Jezus-boeken", as it has been written by Schillebeeckx to clarify and elaborate a number of controversial points which were already dealt with in his previous massive volumes.

2. *Jesus, An Experiment in Christology*, p. 839.

3. *God the Future of Man*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 156.

framework interpreting it.<sup>4</sup> So Schillebeeckx is careful to show, at first, that the offer of salvation from the earthly Jesus of Nazareth and the Christian response to it come together within very definite historical experiences and very concrete traditions of experience in the one story of the New Testament. A critical reflection on Jesus Christ requires therefore a historical study not only of what has really come to expression in Jesus of Nazareth, but also of the historical horizon of experience and expectation within which originally the Aramaic and later the Greek-speaking Jews, and much later also the "pagans", reacted positively to the historical phenomenon, Jesus of Nazareth. So, the basic issue of Schillebeeckx's Christological work is, on the one hand, about the Christian "unadulterated Christ," and on the other hand, about the disclosure of the pathway to Jesus as the way to open the possibility of belief in Christ in our own contemporary context.

Consequently, in his employment of the "critical-historical-method" within faith parameters, Schillebeeckx has shown that it is extremely necessary to seek out an "image of Jesus" that can withstand every historical critique but that every person in his or her own irreducible particularity escapes the scientific approach. For there is always a surplus which remains after the sum total of critical results. Hence Schillebeeckx is very careful in attempting to define theoretically the soteriological significance of Jesus, and consequently his personal identity. He maintains that a person cannot be approached as person by a process of purely theoretical, scientific analysis. The one who is prepared to take a "risk", however, can still recognize in the story of Jesus the great "parable of God" himself and simultaneously the "paradigm of our humanity", a new and unheard possibility of existence offered because God himself was concerned with humanity. Subsequently, the question arises as to whether a precise theoretical definition of the divine event which overwhelmed Jesus and which constitutes the heart and soul of his entire life, impoverishes the event and is therefore likely to come near to distortion, one-sidedness and heresy.<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted from the beginning that Schillebeeckx does not claim to have worked out a complete Christology in his (finished?)

4. Christ. *The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, pp. 31 ff; *Interim Report on the Books Jesus and Christ*, pp. 13 ff.

5. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, "The 'God of Jesus' and the 'Jesus of God'" in *Concilium* 10 (1974) p. 124.

volumes. He feels that the results of the exegetical research of this century demands the theologian to rethink dogmatically the roots of Christology in a way heretofore neglected in theology. Schillebeeckx devotes the major portions of his two big volumes, therefore, to a close study of the exegetical research. This is accomplished in spite of formidable hermeneutical difficulties of which Schillebeeckx is well aware and against which he takes elaborate precautions. To radically rethink Christology one must dwell at length, and with great care, upon the roots and the earliest formative period of the Christian reflexion on Jesus Christ. Because of this, even after the second volume Schillebeeckx thinks he has worked out only *prolegomena* to Christology.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, based on the contemporary epistemological studies, Schillebeeckx does not think that the contemporary task of theology is the creation of new Christological models but the gathering together of "elements which may lead to a new, authentic disclosure experience or source experience."<sup>7</sup>

The core of Schillebeeckx's hermeneutical Christology, therefore, consists in the Christian acknowledgement that God has brought about a decisive and definitive salvation for the liberation of people in the life history of Jesus of Nazareth. Besides, his contention is that any "theoretical" theology should be connected both with "stories" and, even more importantly, with orthopraxis. This orthopraxis is the praxis of the "Kingdom of God", without which any theory or story will cease to be credible, especially in a world which is demanding justice and freedom. When this is done, theory, story and the praxis of the Kingdom of God will become an effective invitation to answer in real freedom the question: "But who do you say that I am?" The subsequent Christological attempt would then free us from any Christology that merely admires "a divine Ikon" and thereby breeds a new ideology out of Christology itself.<sup>8</sup>

In this way, the Christological work of Schillebeeckx necessarily takes a hue different from that of most modern Christologies. His

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6. *Christ. The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, p. 25; *Interim Report on the Books Jesus and Christ*, p. 95. Schillebeeckx believes that the "prolegomena to a future Christological synthesis can be historically more important than complete Christologies in which in the end the prolegomena of previous generations are presented as complete systems." See, "Technical Information," in *Christ, The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, p. 906.

7. *Jesus. An Experiment in Christology*, p. 571.

8. See *ibid.*, p. 671.



entire Christological work is ultimately intended to be an invitation extended to the reader, on the basis of material studied objectively through the historical investigation, to undergo the same Christian experience or 'disclosure-discovery' as the one the first Christians were able to have with Jesus. Ultimately, then, Schillebeeckx's Christological hermeneutics is meant to make the universal significance of Jesus—given by God for all people—intelligible and credible for contemporary men and women. This necessarily results in a Christology in a new key.

# Two Indians, Two Orientals Beatified

E.R. HAMBYE, S.J.

On 8 February 1986 two saintly Christians are raised to the altar as *beati* by Pope John Paul II. Such an act of beatification is normally the first step taken towards they being declared 'saints' in a full-fledged canonization.

Who are they and why are they given this exceptional honour?

The first, by chronological order, is Fr Kuriakose Elias Chavara. He belongs to an old and well-connected Syro-Malabar family of Kainakary (Kerala) in the famed "backwaters" on the Arabian Sea coast. As is often the case among St Thomas Christians, his family was a "priestly" one, known for having nursed priests in almost every generation.

Kuriakose was born in 1805. His early schooling was local and very traditional. At the age of 15 he joined a recently opened, though also traditional, seminary at Pallipuram. There the young man studied eagerly under a malpan, priest-teacher, whose name was Thomas Palakat. They were later to be closely associated. Kuriakose was ordained a priest in 1829. Already by the time, it seems, he was convinced of the need for a religious congregation in his own Syro-Malabar Church. After some pastoral work he came back to his seminary as assistant to Palakat.

Three years later Chavara, Palakat and a third companion, Fr Thomas Porukara, decided to open the congregation they had dreamt of. The foundation stone of the first house at Mannanam was blessed by Porukara on 11 May 1831.

It is quite proved that they would have liked to follow the Dominican pattern of the Order of Preachers, in preference to any other. Chavara himself was keen on preaching and on fostering the preaching habits in the clergy. Since, however, the Discalced Carmelites were very well-known to the three founders, besides being then very powerful in Kerala, the new congregation took after the Carmelite rather than the Dominican tradition.

Fr Kuriakose Elias was Prior of Mannanam and Prior General till his death in 1871. Under his leadership eight more mona-

steries were founded. On the 8th December 1855 the Congregation was officially established under the name of "Servants of the Immaculate Mother of Mt Carmel". In 1861, it became known as T.O. C.D., i.e., Third Order of Carmelites Discalced. Now, since 1958, the official name is C.M.I., i.e., Carmelites of Mary Immaculate.

Chavara was a man of vision endowed with a profound sense of realism. He was responsible for the opening of three seminaries run by his men: they worked till 1894 when a central seminary for all Kerala was established. Chavara founded the first Catholic Press of the land at Mannanam, where it is still thriving. The Press was the first to publish prayer-books in Malayalam. Chavara himself was a writer of some note, particularly of prayers and devotional books, and also of an autobiography in poetry.

In 1861 the Prior General and the monasteries were confronted with a situation that endangered the future of their Church. For some time a majority of the Syro-Malabar people had become increasingly restive under the Latin rule represented by foreign missionaries. That majority wanted to recapture their Oriental identity lost through no fault of theirs. Perhaps the Catholic Chaldaean patriarchate in Irak could help them. The patriarchate was not altogether indifferent to the prospect of restoring its old historical links with "Malabar".

At any rate, a Chaldean bishop, Mar Rokos, was sent to Kerala and his first impact was almost staggering: of the 150 Syro-Malabar churches 86 followed him completely, 36 partially. Unfortunately, such a success was divisive. It had no real future. Chavara and his men understood this quickly. In June 1861 Chavara was appointed Vicar General for the Syrians, as a concession to the latter's feelings. Within a year the attempt to re-establish the link with the Middle East had ended in a failure. Mar Rokos had to go back to Irak.

Fr Chavara was also the founder of the first congregation of Carmelite nuns, another Third Order Regular. The first convent opened at Kunamavu, with two candidates, on the 11th February 1866.

As just shown in the case of the Mar Rokos' adventure, Chavara clearly exercised a considerable influence on his own people. He helped the reform of the clergy, the improvement of the laity, the spread of charitable works, the apostolate among Harijans, etc. Each of his monasteries was meant to be a centre of charities and educational welfare. He himself was a very popular preacher,

and in many ways the leading personality of his time in his own Church, until his death on the 3rd January 1871.

His conception of priestly and religious life was deeply ascetical, and he was endowed with the privilege of mystical prayer. This was particularly shown in his extraordinary devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Though his own Church traditions were then heavily latinized, he had kept a deep sense of the importance of the liturgical life. This helped him codify, though within certain limits, the canonical prayers of the three hours, evening, night and morning.

Perhaps Fr Kuriakose Elias did not realise it, but his ideal as founder of a religious congregation is very close to certain oriental, if not Indian, traditions, which combine a monastic outlook with the apostolate.

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On 28 July 1946, in the Franciscan Tertiary convent of Bharananganam, a Christian village east of Palai, a nun of 36 years of age breathed her last. She was called Sister Alphonsa. Much more quickly than in the case of Fr Chavara, her fame of sanctity drew crowds seeking her intercession. Precautions had to be taken lest a real cult take place at her tomb in the parish church, which might indefinitely postpone her cause of beatification.

At her funeral her special spiritual Father, Romulus, C.M.I., said in a prophetic mood: "I assure you that as far as human judgment can be relied on, this young nun was not much less saintly than the Little Flower of Lisieux."

Anna Muttathupadath was born prematurely on 9 August 1910 in the village of Kudamalur, which has a very ancient Syro-Malabar community. She was the fourth child of the family. Her mother died soon after the birth and she was educated by an aunt. It was soon discovered that she was endowed with a strong will. At the age of 13, when her people wanted to get her married, she somewhat disfigured herself by walking into a fire. She wanted to become a nun, and so she did. On the 2nd August 1928 she joined as a postulant, the Franciscan Tertiaries, generally known in Kerala as Clarists. This congregation was founded by the only Jesuit bishop of Kottayam-Changanacherry, Mgr Charles Lavigne, who was Vicar-Apostolic there in 1891-1896.

Already as a novice, in August 1935, Alphonsa fell gravely sick, a

foreshadow of the cross of suffering she would carry nearly through all her life. However, she was cured, thanks to Fr Chavara's intercession, who, according to her own testimony, appeared to her. She took her final vows on the 12th August 1936. Later on, another sickness was the occasion of an apparition of the Little Flower and of a second one of Fr Chavara. One can now understand better how fitting it is to have both these saintly persons beatified on the same day. They are spiritually related.

The next few years, before her death, were passed in suffering of various kinds. She was anointed several times. According to her belief, this meant that she was called to share fully in Christ's passion, as far as it is humanly possible. Yet those acute pains were hardly noticeable, so admirable was her self-control. Her deep devotion to the S. Heart of Jesus made her take all those sufferings as means of reparation for the sins of the world; it helped her to live in great intimacy with the Lord. She used to say: "Am I not, in any case, a child of suffering? It is a source of joy and peace to me." It is also known that that her worst moments took place during the night, and this was at her own request: "The Lord granted my prayer." Her joy was contagious. Thus she was a source of courage to others who suffered.

In the Holy Eucharist she found the source of her patience and an incredible moral strength. She was so strongly attached to the Blessed Sacrament that her prayer in this respect was certainly out of the ordinary. As could be expected, she was very much attached to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom she invoked as "Mother" on her death bed.

One of her favourite prayers is worth recording: "Jesus, Sun of Justice, by thy divine rays clarify my thoughts, illumine my mind, purify my heart, consume me in the fire of thy love and thus make me one with thee."

Fr Chavara and Sr Alphonsa deserve the honours of the altar, first and foremost, because they led a life of union with God, endowed with exceptional gifts of prayer. Sr Alphonsa practised it in a spirit of self-oblation, as witnessed to by her letters to her spiritual Father. As for Fr Chavara, he was, moreover, a builder of his own Church, on which he left his mark until our own days.

India can be proud of those two Blessed. They stand as symbols for her always renewed search for God and of dedication to the welfare of others.

## Documents

### Final Statement of Bira IV/2

#### *Introduction*

In answer to the call of the Spirit to make the Church of Asia a better sign and an instrument of the Reign of God, we, the representatives of the FABC member Conferences, have come together in prayerful reflection. This meeting is the second Bishops' Institute for Inter-religious Affairs on the Theology of Dialogue, held at Pattaya, Thailand from November 17 to 22, 1985. The theme of this meeting (BIRA IV/2) has been "The Church at the Service of God's Reign."

During the past few months, the idea of the Kingdom of God and the role of the Church in it, have been the subject of our meditations. During these days of the meeting we have shared with one another as brothers and sisters, in openness and humility, the fruits of our reflections.

#### *Situation*

We see the Church as struggling to free herself from her historical burden, e.g., from the stigmata of being foreign to the eyes of both her own children and the peoples of Asia, and from the scars of being attached to alienating structures. She is still endeavouring to set herself free from the vestiges of Western and colonial influences.

We see the Church of Asia as "small flocks" living in the midst of vast numbers of peoples who have different beliefs and persuasions in which we find the values of the Kingdom—deep religiosity, prayer and contemplation—which are sources of our own enrichment. We see therefore the Church as weakly emerging from self-centeredness towards a maturity that urges her to reach out to all brothers and sisters of other Christian Churches, religions and peoples of good will in service and in love.

We see that the greater part of her children are young and in search for meaning within her and oft-times demanding a rightful voice and place for greater involvement.

We see that the Church in Asia is a Church in tensions. These tensions spring from different perceptions of the Church and other human factors, as well as from the challenges posed by adherents of other religions.

We see that the vast majority of the people of Asia are living in utter poverty due to injustice and other several factors. They are

voiceless and deprived of the opportunity to decide what is meaningful in their lives. In many of the Asian countries, women are exploited and discriminated against in various ways.

This common picture which we see causes in us no small anxiety. Yet we are not without firm reasons for hope. Through the pains and the joys that we here experience, we are able to discern with clarity, the meaning and the values of God's Kingdom and the indications as to where, as Church, we are destined to proceed.

### *Reflections*

During these days of reflection, we have come to believe more firmly and realize more clearly:

That the Reign of God is the very reason for the being of the Church. The Church exists in and for the Kingdom.

The Kingdom, God's gift and initiative, is already begun and is continually being realized and made present through the Spirit. Where God is accepted, when the Gospel values are lived, where man is respected . . . there is the Kingdom. It is far wider than the Church's boundaries. This already present reality is oriented towards the final manifestation and full perfection of the Reign of God.

That the Church is an instrument for the actualization of the Kingdom. In this process of continual renewal and actualization she empties herself and dies like her Master (Phil 2:7), through transforming suffering and even persecution that she may rise to a new life that approaches the reality of the Kingdom.

That to become living members of the Church, individuals, families, clergy and religious must have a deeper experience of their relationship to God and his unconditional love. Such experience should lead to true Christian discipleship and maturity in faith. Trusting only in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church can reach out to all people without fear of losing her own identity. Institution though she be, the Church is charged with building community among its own members, as well as with humankind. It is in a spirit of humble servanthood that she must dedicate herself to these tasks, especially in what concerns the person and the common good.

That this reaching out is *dialogue* which is communicated first as witness in being and in deeds. "It means not only discussion, but also includes all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment" (*New Guidelines* from the Secretariat for Non-Christians). The relationships that ensue arise from the hearts of people primarily and not from programmes and structures. In the final analysis, the Reign of God will be best proclaimed by an authentic witnessing of the Gospel values—simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the

lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice" (EN no. 76).

That this dialogue is based on the firm belief that the Holy Spirit is operative in other religions as well. "Thus the Church is enriched through her encounter with them" (John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*). That as a sign and an instrument that reaches out, the Church is in dialogue with all of creation, with all peoples, with her own self, and above all, with God. In concrete, this dialogue takes into account the totality of life. Dialogue is therefore to be carried out at all levels. Thus there are different kinds of dialogue: dialogue of life, dialogue of deeds, dialogue of experts, and dialogue in the sharing of the experience of faith (*New Guidelines*).

The need for this was underlined by Pope John Paul II in his message to the Bishops of Bangladesh and he reiterates this to the Bishops of the other countries; "In recent years the Church has become more and more aware of the need for dialogue as a principle of action both inside and outside herself. As a result, she has examined with greater care her relationships with non-Christian religions."

Given the Asian situation of poverty and pluralism, it is urgent that persons of all faiths make common cause in a dialogue of action together to respond to the cry for human dignity, brotherhood and freedom.

We realize that this vocation as a sign of the Kingdom is given by God to the Church which is only too human and indeed a vessel of clay (2 Cor 4:7). She is not devoid of shortcomings in this mission. Thus part of this mission is for the Church to be constantly healing herself. And in this humble and often humiliating process, she becomes a more authentic sign of the grace of the Kingdom.

### *Recommendations*

These reflections and insights have emboldened us to make the following recommendations:

That our formation programs for priests, religious and laity, be geared towards a spirituality which lays greater stress on the values which are expressed in the Word of God especially in the Beatitudes. The laity constitute the vast majority of the Church. Without them dialogue will be meaningless. Therefore they should be given every opportunity to form themselves for a meaningful dialogue among themselves and with peoples of other religions.

That these formation programmes lend themselves to a greater stress on the Church which is primarily a community of faith and a servant of all in God's Reign.

The formation of Basic Christian Communities which are self-



reliant should lead to the formation of Basic Human Communities. In this way the Church of Asia can truly become servant of all.

That the Church join with peoples of goodwill in the ministry of healing a world which is seriously wounded by greed and hatred.

That Centers for formation and the promotion of dialogue be set up on national and regional levels. Realizing the vital importance of dialogue today, the Bishops should consider it as their personal responsibility to take initiatives in this regard.

That in these dialogues the Church relate herself directly with people and not through her projects and programmes only. In these person-oriented relationships, Church leaders will no longer be considered as mere managers and administrators but also as men and women of deep faith in whom everyone can experience the nearness of God.

We suggest the following priorities:

1. Set up Pastoral Centers for dialogue which coordinate formation programmes, formulate guidelines for dialogue and prepare programmes for mass media; in case this is not possible, make better use of existing centers and ecumenical groups which carry out the same programmes.
2. Set up courses in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam; organize programmes for actual exposure to the world of other religions; introduce the concept, vision and understanding of the Kingdom of God into catechetical programmes and sermon outlines; organize seminars and orientation programmes on Dialogue for Bishops, Priests, Religious and Laity; emphasize the theology of the Kingdom in seminary curricula to effect personal commitment.
3. Initiate interfaith meetings and sharing of religious experiences at all levels of society; promote joining socio economic and cultural projects.

### *Conclusion*

Towards the end of this meeting, even as we tried to give our best, we feel unequal to the task of addressing ourselves to the present situation and to answer the challenges of our own reflections. But we are not disheartened, since we see signs of hope in the initiatives which have already been taken by the universal and the local Churches to implement the total task of the Church, like the deepening of prayer through ashrams and prayer houses, pilot projects with a preferential option for the poor in educational and social institutions, living dialogues on human problems with persons of

other faiths, worship and development projects of a self-help nature, etc.

Thus we persist in the hope that men and women of faith and good will, strengthened by the experience of common humanity, will join in the building of God's Kingdom whose completion He alone can bring about.

#### PRAYER:

We thank the Lord Almighty for the grace of inspiration and insight given us during these days of our joint reflection and we implore His continued assistance and that of His Blessed Mother, the Mother of the Church, that the Church may be a striking sign and instrument of His reign on earth.

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#### The Kairos Document

This document expresses the stand against apartheid taken by 111 theologians hailing from the Roman Catholic Church, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Methodist Church, the Reformed Church in Africa, the United Congregational Church, the Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church, and others. According to *Origins*, more than 151 theologians are now signatories to the document. The document was published in September 1985. The signatories take joint responsibility for the document. The prophetic stand taken by this group of theologians against apartheid is significant for the Church in India too, where we have to wage our struggles against oppressive forces dehumanising the tribals, dalits and the marginalised of our Indian society.

The South African theologians sense that the *Kairos*, the time of judgment against apartheid, has arrived. Apartheid must be dismantled. Apartheid is a challenge to the Church.

The document is a Christian, biblical and theological comment on the political situation in South Africa, which is a situation of death. It is a critique of the state of theology in South Africa. It takes issue with two models of theology, the "State Theology" and the "Church Theology," that guide the activities of the Church in her attempt to solve the political crisis of the country, and proposes an alternative model, a Prophetic Theology spelling out its challenge to action. The theologians reflect on this issue of their country in five chapters. They consider the first publication of their reflections only a beginning, a basis for further reflection by Christians and churches in the country. They invite all Christian believers everywhere to support them in their struggle to speedily put an end to the apartheid

destructive system that claims so many lives. Here is a summary of this 25-page document.

## CH. 1. THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

"The time has arrived, the moment of truth has arrived". There is every indication that a crisis in South Africa has just begun, and that it will continue to deepen. The theologians perceive that this moment is very serious. For Christians, this is the *Kairos*, the moment of grace and opportunity, a moment in which God challenges believers to decisive action. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because she did not recognise her opportunity (*kairos*) (Lk 19:44). This is also a dangerous time because if the moment is allowed to pass by, the loss for all will be immeasurable.

The crisis shows up that the Church is divided. There are two churches, a White Church and a Black Church. In the life-and-death conflict, there are Christians on both sides, even within the same denomination, and some are trying to sit on the fence. In such a situation, the relevance of the Christian faith and the use of the Bible become serious problems for the Church. The theologians see an acute problem in the oppressor and the oppressed claiming loyalty to the same Church. Both are baptised in the same baptism and share in the breaking of the same bread in Church, while, outside, Christian policemen are beating up and killing Christian children and other Christians stand by and make a weak plea for peace!

This is a moment of truth and judgement. Christians are compelled to analyse carefully the different theologies in their churches. The document has isolated three theologies, a "State Theology", a "Church Theology" and a "Prophetic Theology." It criticises mercilessly the first two.

## CH. 2. CRITIQUE OF THE "STATE THEOLOGY"

Romans 13:1-7: Totalitarian regimes down the centuries of Christian history have legitimised servile and blind obedience to the State by appealing to this text of Paul the moment Christians offer resistance, as if Christians were here commanded to endorse and abet all the crimes of a totalitarian State. The use made of this text by the "State Theology" is unjustifiable. Paul is not presenting us with an absolute and universal doctrine about the State, valid for all times and places. The "State Theology" abstracts such a text from its context and interprets it as a general proposition distorting the meaning of God's Word. Paul was writing to a particular Christian community in Rome which had its own problems in relation to the State. Biblical scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the rest of the Bible does not demand obedience to oppressive rulers. The Jews and the Christians did not believe their imperial overlords in

Egypt, Babylon, Greece and Rome had a kind of divine right to rule and oppress them. Rather, such rulers and their empires are the beasts described in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. "God allowed them to rule for a while but he did not *approve* of what they did." God's will for His people was freedom and Rom 13:1-7 cannot contradict this.

Paul was here not immediately concerned with the issue of a just or unjust State, or the need to change one government for another. There will always be some kind of secular authority, and Christians are not exonerated from due obedience to secular laws and authorities. One must note that Paul does not say anything at all about what Christians should do when the State becomes unjust and oppressive. The use the "State Theology" makes of this text, without attention to its context, tells us more about the political options of those who construct this theology than about the meaning of God's Word. If we look for guidance in the Bible in the context of an oppressive State, which betrays its calling and serves Satan, then we must turn to ch. 13 of the Book of Revelation in which the Roman State is pictured as the servant of the dragon (the devil). "God will not permit his unfaithful servant to reign for ever."

### *Law and Order*

The State makes use of the theme of law and order to maintain the status quo. In the State which upholds apartheid, the "law" is the unjust and discriminatory laws and the "order" it protects and reinforces is "the organised and institutionalised disorder of oppression." A law is not just simply because the State has enacted it, and an order is not a right order just because it is protected by the State. Christians cannot accept any kind of law and any kind of order. There should be in South Africa a just law and a right order. The "State Theology" has tried to re-establish a "status quo of orderly discrimination, exploitation and oppression" and accuses those who break the law and order of being ungodly. The State goes to the extent of demanding, in the name of law and order, an obedience which must be given to God alone. In the present situation, millions of Christians say with Peter, "We must obey God rather than human beings" (Acts 5:29).

### *The Threat of Communism*

The State that maintains apartheid labels anything that questions and threatens the status quo "Communist." It calls anyone who opposes the State and the "State Theology" a "communist." The "State Theology" uses the label "communist" as its symbol of evil. It is used for godless behaviour.

While oppressing the people, the State uses the name of God

blasphemously. Such use is found in the apartheid Constitution: "In humble submission to Almighty God, who controls the destinies of nations and the history of peoples; who gathered our forebears together from many lands and gave them their own; who has guided them from generation to generation; who has wonderfully delivered them from the dangers that beset them . . ." The god of this Constitution is an idol, a god who is on the side of the settlers, dispossesses black people of their land and assigns a major part of it to his elect. This god who exalts the proud and humbles the poor is not the living God of the Bible (Lk 1:51-52). The use of God's name and His Word by "The State theology" is not only heretical but also blasphemous. Christians are horrified when they see churches like the white Dutch Reformed Church and other groups subscribe to such a heretical theology. It is sad that the "State Theology" finds its own prophets and theologians from the ranks of the ministers of God's Word. Sadder still, many Christians are fooled and confused by their heretical theology.

### CH.3. CRITIQUE OF THE "CHURCH THEOLOGY"

Relaying on an analysis of the statements of the so-called "English-speaking" Churches, the document questions the theological assumptions, implications and practicality of the "Church Theology." This theology is critical of apartheid only in a limited, cautious and guarded way. The document critiques the stock ideas of the "Church Theology," viz., reconciliation (peace), justice and non-violence.

*Reconciliation* is, in the "Church Theology," the key to the solution of the problem. According to this theology, reconciliation means sorting out misunderstandings between two sides. It does not recognise the situation of conflict in which one side is wrong and the other right, nor "conflicts that can only be described as the struggle between justice and injustice, good and evil, God and the devil." Reconciliation tries to evade confrontation. But those who participate in the evil must be confronted. The struggle for justice necessarily includes struggle against injustice. Only then can we speak of true reconciliation. Any attempt to make the oppressed accept the oppression and be reconciled to the unbearable crimes committed against people is not reconciliation but sin. No reconciliation is possible, no forgiveness, without repentance for the crime and the sin of apartheid. A regime that continues the policy of apartheid through repression is a clear proof of the total absence of repentance. All want genuine peace and reconciliation based on repentance, truth, justice and love. Is not peace the work of justice? Creating such a peace may be at the price of conflict, disunity and dissension along the way. "Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth. No, I tell you, but rather dissension" (Lk 12:51). The Church leaders must adopt a biblical theology of direct confrontation with the forces of evil rather than reconciliation with evil and sin.

### *Justice*

The "Church Theology" in South Africa has made some strong demands for justice. But we must ask: What kind of justice? It is the justice of *reform* determined by the oppressor, the white minority. It is a *concession* given to people. It is not the more radical justice that comes from below, determined by the people of South Africa. All Church statements are appeals made to the State, to the white community, to those who are at the top of the pile. They are mainly appeals to the good will and conscience of those who perpetrate injustice. This approach to conversion and moralising demands has not worked and it will never work. The problem we are dealing with in South Africa is not just a problem of personal guilt but one of structural injustice, a system of iniquity. In such a situation, the oppressed cannot just sit and wait for "the crumbs of some small reforms."

True justice and God's justice demands a radical change of structures which can come only from below, from the oppressed themselves. God will bring about change through the oppressed, as he did with the oppressed Israel in Egypt. God's justice does not come through the reforms of the Pharaohs of this world. Strangely, the "Church Theology" never demands that the oppressed stand up for their rights and struggle for justice.

### *Non-Violence*

The "Church Theology" resorts to a blanket condemnation of all that is called violence, regardless of the real violence of the situation and the recent escalation of State violence. It makes non-violence into an absolute principle, without judging who is using it, what side they are on and what purpose they have in mind.

The State and the media call violence what people do in the townships as they struggle for justice, and exclude the structural, institutional and unrepentant violence of the State and the oppressive and naked violence of the police and the army. The latter is at the most acknowledged as "excessive", as "misconduct", never as violence. In these circumstances a call for non-violence criticises the people's resistance. "Violence" as used by the State is a loaded word. It is illegitimate to use the same word and make a blanket condemnation covering the ruthless and repressive activities of the State and the desperate attempts of the people to defend themselves. Acts of oppression, injustice and domination cannot be equated with acts of resistance and self-defence, just as the violence of a rapist cannot be put on a par with the resistance of the woman victim of rape. The "Church Theology" use of the word violence without distinctions is confusing and ideological.

In the Bible, the word violence is used to describe everything done by a wicked person. (e.g. Ps 72:12-14; Is 59:1-8; Jr 22:13-17;

Amos 3:9-10; 6:3; Mic 2:2; 3:1-3; 6:12) and it is never used to describe the activities of the Israelites to liberate themselves. When Jesus says that we must turn the other cheek, he warns us against revenge. He is not telling us not to resist or defend ourselves or others. A long Christian tradition has justified the use of physical force against aggressors and tyrants. This is not to say that any use of force is permissible simply because people struggle for liberation. There have been cases of killing or maiming that no Christian would want to approve of. But such disapproval is based on concern for genuine liberation and on conviction that such acts are unnecessary and counterproductive, not on a blanket condemnation of all violence.

While the "Church Theology" professes non-violence, it is suspect because Church leaders give support to the growing militarization of the State. It is inconsistent on the part of the Church to condemn all violence and then appoint chaplains to a very violent and oppressive army. The activities of the blacks in the townships are not regarded as defensive, while those of the army and the police are! What one labels as violence and what one calls defence depends upon which side one is on. To call all physical force violence is to be neutral and to refuse to judge who is right and who is wrong.

#### *The Fundamental Problem: Social Analysis*

In the "Church Theology" no attempt is made to really analyse what is happening. There is no understanding of the mechanics of oppression and injustice. There is no adequate social and political analysis of apartheid. The gospel does not provide a non-political solution to political problems. But there is a Christian way of approaching political solutions, a Christian spirit, motivation and attitude. The Church cannot bypass politics and political strategies.

The question raised about the "Church Theology" is: Why has it not developed a social analysis? Why has it an inadequate understanding of political strategies? And why does it make a virtue of neutrality? Perhaps the answer lies in the type of faith and spirituality that has dominated the Church for too long. The other-worldly concern discounted political matters as worldly. The individualistic spirituality of passivity and resignation to God's will considered social and political problems to be below the sphere of spirituality. Such a faith and such a spirituality are not biblical. In the Bible there is no dichotomy of the human person into the private and social spheres. God redeems the whole human person. God's redemptive will is relevant to every area of human life, and so too is Christian faith.

#### CH. 4. TOWARDS A PROPHETIC THEOLOGY

The present *Kairos* calls for a response that is biblical, spiritual and prophetic. Statements of generalised Christian principles are

not adequate. The Church needs to give a response that addresses itself to the crisis of the country. Christians have to take an unambiguous stand.

The Prophetic Theology must attempt a social analysis in the manner of "reading the signs of the time" (Mt 16:3) or interpreting the *kairos* (Lk 12:56). The present conflict is not just a racial war as if between two equal races. The situation is one of oppression and of conflict between an oppressor and the oppressed, a conflict between two irreconcilable interests. Those who are interested in the status quo introduce a number of reforms to make sure that the system is not changed. They continue to benefit from the system and to accumulate a great deal of wealth and affluence.

Those who do not benefit from the system are treated as mere labour units, paid starvation wages, separated from their families and dumped into homelands as if they were cattle, all to the benefit of a privileged minority. A "reformed" system is not in their interest. They can no longer allow themselves to be crushed, exploited and oppressed. What they struggle for is justice for all. The situation is one of civil war and revolution. There can be no compromise between two conflicting projects.

### *Oppression in the Bible*

Oppression is a central theme that runs through the Old and New Testaments. In the Bible, there are no less than twenty different Hebrew words to describe oppression. According to T. D. Hanks oppression is "a basic structural category of biblical theology." (*God So Loved the Third World*, Orbis, 1983, p. 4).

The Bible describes oppression as the experience of being crushed, humiliated, defrauded, enslaved. Oppressors are described as ruthless, greedy, violent and tyrannical, and as the enemy. Such description can come only from a people who had had a long and painful experience of oppression. Nearly ninety per cent of the history of the Jewish and Christian people as told in the Bible is a history of domestic or international oppression. Israel as a people was built on the experience of oppression as slaves in Egypt. What made the difference to them was the revelation of Yahweh, the one who has compassion on those who suffer and who liberates them from their oppression (cf. Ex 3:7-9).

Yahweh in the Bible is the liberator of the oppressed. He does not attempt to reconcile Moses and Pharaoh. Oppression is sin. God wills to do away with the oppression. He takes the side of the oppressed (Ps 10:6). God's identification with the oppressed continues in the mission and ministry of Jesus as announced by him in the Synagogue of Nazareth (Lk 4:18-14).

At the same time, Jesus is not unconcerned with the rich. He



calls them to repentance. According to Jesus, there can be no double loyalty to God and to mammon. The oppressed Christians in South Africa have known for long that they are united to Christ in their suffering and humiliation. By his death on the cross, Jesus became a victim of oppression and violence.

### *Tyranny in Christian Tradition*

There is a long Christian tradition according to which a tyrant or a tyrannical regime loses the moral right to govern and the people acquire a right to reject and overthrow the tyrant or a tyrannical regime. A tyrannical regime forfeits its moral legitimacy, even if it is recognised by other governments. Despite differences of opinion among Christians regarding the means used to replace a tyrant, there has been no doubt about the Christian obligation to refuse to co-operate with tyranny and do whatever people can to remove it.

A tyrant is the enemy of the common good. The purpose of all government is to promote the common good of the governed. It is to govern in the interests of the whole people. Ours it is not the case of a few mistakes or failures to promote the common good. When a government is in principle hostile to the common good and has a mandate to govern in the interests of some of the people instead of all the people, then this government is an enemy of the people. Such a government is in principle irreformable. Its "reforms" will serve only the minority.

A tyrant cannot continue to rule for long without becoming more and more violent. His reign always ends up as a reign of terror. From the start, the tyrant is an enemy of the common good and therefore of the people. The majority of the people of South Africa think that the apartheid regime of South Africa is the enemy of the people because a minority regime elected by a small section of the people and mandated by them to rule in the interest and for the benefit of the white community alone is by its very nature hostile to the common good of all the people. This means that the apartheid minority regime cannot experience conversion and cannot be expected to abandon the policy of apartheid, since it has no mandate to do. It can, therefore, only make reforms and adjustments for the benefit of its electorate. Even if there are some in the government who experience conversion, they would have to follow this through by opting out of such a regime that came into power precisely because of its policy of apartheid. It is clear that a regime which is in principle enemy of the people cannot suddenly begin to rule in the interests of all. This has to be done by another government elected by the majority of the people with the explicit mandate to rule in the interests of all.

A regime that has made itself the enemy of people has made itself the enemy of God. Not all who support the system know this.

Many of them are blinded by the State propaganda. They are frequently ignorant of the consequences of their stand. But this does not make the State any less tyrannical or any less an enemy of the people and an enemy of God. However, this is no excuse for hatred. Christians are called to love enemies (Mt 5:44). We have to identify tyrannical regimes and enemies. But we must love them. The most loving thing we can do for the oppressed and our oppressors is to eliminate oppression, remove tyrants from their positions of power, and install a just government that will serve the common good of all the people.

### *A Message of Hope*

At this moment of crisis in South Africa, there is nothing more relevant than a message of hope which is at the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This message of hope is linked to the coming of God's Kingdom. God is at work in the world turning hopeless situations to good. Believers have the invincible hope that goodness and justice and love will triumph and that tyranny and oppression will be defeated.

We also ask why the basic Christian message of hope has not been highlighted by the "Church Theology." Is it because the leaders of the church are speaking to the oppressors rather than to the oppressed and do not want the oppressed to become too hopeful of too much? The oppressed, and especially the youth, are acting fearlessly and courageously with a sure hope that liberation will come. Their bodies may be broken, but not their spirit. This hope needs to be strengthened and spread.

The oppressors and those who believe in the propaganda of the State are fearful. They must be made aware of the evil of the system and called to repentance. They must also be offered something to hope for, a genuine liberation and justice for all. The road to this hope is long and painful. But our faith tells us that God is with us. Sharing in the cross of Christ and his people is the way to share in his resurrection.

## CH. 5. CHALLENGE TO ACTION

### *God Sides with the Oppressed*

We must first recognise that the majority of the Christians in South Africa have taken sides against oppression, for the greater part of the Church in Africa is poor and oppressed. But one cannot take for granted that every one of the oppressed has taken up his own cause and is struggling for liberation. The theologians own the fact that the Church in South Africa is divided. That means that not all Christians are united with the God who is always on

the side of the poor. Unity and reconciliation with God and Jesus is not possible without taking sides with the poor and the oppressed.

### *Participation in the Struggle*

The call comes to Christians to participate in the struggle for liberation and a just society. The campaigns of the people must be supported by the Church, even if at times criticism will be necessary. The Church must move "beyond mere ambulance ministry" to participation in the people's struggle.

The specific activities of the Church such as Sunday services and other ministries, and the specific way of expressing the faith must be reshaped and made more consistent with a prophetic praxis as demanded by the *kairos* God is offering Christians today. For instance, the evil forces in South Africa must be named in the liturgy of baptism. So too the type of unity and sharing in the eucharist and the kind of repentance needed must be named. These activities must be re-appropriated to serve the real religious needs of the people and strengthen the liberating mission of God and the Church. At the same time, the Church should not allow itself to become a "Third Force" between the oppressed and the oppressor and run parallel programmes that run counter to people's organisation and programmes.

### *Civil Obedience*

If the present regime in South Africa has no moral legitimacy, the Church cannot collaborate with it. Otherwise she would give the impression of giving legitimacy to a morally illegitimate regime. Besides praying for a change of government, the Church should also mobilise Christians, at the level of parishes and communities, to reflect on and work out such a change. This would demand from the Church that she be involved in the civil disobedience against the apartheid regime. In the circumstances of apartheid, the Church will have sometimes to confront and disobey the state in its obedience to God.

### *Moral Guidance*

The People look to the Church for moral guidance. First, the Church must make her stand unambiguous, dialoguing with the people and explaining to them their rights and duties. The duty to resist all oppression and struggle for liberation and justice on the part of the oppressed must not be misunderstood. The Church will need sometimes to curb excesses and to appeal to those who may act thoughtlessly. While she is not called to be a bastion of caution and moderation, the Church must ceaselessly offer the message of

the cross expressed in sacrifice for justice and liberation and a message of hope, so that people may act with confidence. The Church must offer this message not only in statements or sermons but in actions, campaigns and divine service.

#### CONCLUSION

The document, as the authors intend it, is not a definitive statement. It is meant to stimulate discussion, reflection and prayer leading to action. All committed Christians are called upon to develop the themes presented here, to criticise and complement them and to turn to God's Word with the questions raised by the South African crisis. The task set out here is addressed to the Church and to all who bear the name of Christian. All must accept responsibility for living out their Christian faith in these circumstances of apartheid. The theologians are convinced that in this situation of crisis, the *kairos*, the moment of God's visitation, has arrived. They call upon all Christian brothers and sisters (here in India all genuine democrats committed to justice for an oppressed people) to support them, so that the daily destruction of human lives may be brought to an end. We in India and in Asia express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in their struggle for dignity, freedom and life. It is our struggle too.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

## Book Reviews

### Theology

**Christian Biblical Ethics.** From Biblical Revelation to Contemporary Christian Praxis: Method and Content. By Robert J. DALY, S.J. *et alit.* New York, Ramsey, Paulist Press 1984 Pp. iv-332. \$9.95.

A task force from the North American Catholic Biblical Association worked for nearly eight years. Its goal was to define the nature of the relationship between the Bible and Christian Ethics and to specify practical methods for working out a Christian biblical ethic. The book presented here is their interim report. It offers useful orientations for professors and students of theology.

The book begins by introducing us to the problem of how the written Word, conditioned by its historicity and linked to communities with different situations and theologies, can still be a book of the Church, given to believers of all times. This record of God's self-disclosure to a different community of believers needs to be released from its time-conditioning in order to serve us, the believers of today. This involves, first, a task of exegesis by the historico-critical method, where we study the origins, context, nature and meaning of the text as intended by its writers. The second task is one of hermeneutics, or of interpretation, where we relate the meaning of the message, studied in its original historical situations, to the historical situations today. This is a process wherein hermeneutics needs exegesis and exegesis is incomplete without hermeneutics.

This type of approach is a far cry from that of "proof-texting" normally used in theology and also in ethics. It is also different from the fundamentalist approach which denies the need for both the exegesis of biblical texts and the actualising of its meaning for us. It does not again follow the approach of "spiritualising exegesis" which, based on a dualist mentality, interprets the texts as meant for the salvation of souls only. This spiritualising approach does not pay attention to the resonance and the challenge of the Word of God to the question of the total salvation of the human community in history. It is a non-historical approach which unduly

narrows the meaning of the Bible for Christian life today.

Chapter two probes into the right relationship that should exist between biblical scholars and theologians. It should clearly be a mutually supportive relationship, as theology is fundamentally biblical. But the problems are there: varying degrees of expertise in biblical theology, texts which continue to be the "cross of interpreters", and the theological or philosophical (ideological) inclinations of both exegetes and theologians. This is especially true when it comes to the interpretative task where the question is, "What is God using the Bible to say?" rather than, "What does the Bible say?" Theologians are never neutral in their theological positions. Still, in judging which aspects of the Scripture are normative in the life of the Church and in doing ethical theology, theologians will do well to ensure that their interpretations are shaped by an imaginative judgement about the way of God's self-disclosure to the community. The book explains also the modes in which the relationship between Bible and doctrine can emerge. The Bible is to a great extent a story, the story of God's self-communication to us, a story that speaks to us and shapes our Christian life and our decisions. The story provides both light and strength to live the Christian life fruitfully.

The Bultmannian demythologisation, says one of the authors, tends to be a rational-intellectual mode of constructing the Bible. It deprives hermeneutics of the tremendous value of the "story" and the imaginative construal that relates the Bible to Christian life and ethics. However, yesterday's images of understanding reality may have to be left behind and a new imaginative construal of reality may be called for. A Christian revelation appealing to us as God's story needs to be retold ever anew. The dynamic character of biblical revelation is its continual call to conversion.

A discussion on the Bible and ethics brings to us to three sources of Christian ethics: (a) Scripture, (b) tradition, (c) human reason and experience. We have to see the written Word, Scripture, as it is handed down through tradition and

lived in a forward-looking community. When we put these sources in an order of priority Scripture tops, the biblical revelation encompassing the other two sources.

One basic consideration for the Christian ethics is its christocentricity: Jesus Christ is the interpretative centre of Christian ethics. Christ is the living centre of the lives of Christians and the exemplar and model for their character formation. The distinctive quality of Christian ethics is understood in terms of the basic intentions and motivations flowing from our new existence in Christ. This is called the distinctive Christian intentionality.

One clarification is important in this connection: the Bible as a whole gives us an orientation flowing from our faith in Christ, in the form of parables, teachings and meaningful events, etc. It is not concerned of itself with the ethical questions of establishing moral normativeness. We may distinguish between biblical revelation, biblical studies and biblical ethics. Biblical ethics is a science and an art. We do need it as a science within the Christian community, even though most Christians may not have access to it as science of biblical or Christian ethics. They have rather a faith access to the biblical revelation in the light of which they make moral decisions spontaneously, in the context of the Christian life of the community.

The book discusses political authority in the light of biblical faith. In this area the Church must keep a critical distance from all political authority. All obedience to political authority is provisional. The fundamental value of the human person, human life and human community, enlightened by the Word of God and the paradigm of Christ, demand both obedience to and judgement on the political authority. The Church needs to relate herself to the political authority, but critically.

One of the editing team, Antony J. Tambasco, examines the dialogue that needs to be established between the First and Third World ethics. The dialogue concerns the method and not the content in these two kinds of ethics. In liberation theology the social analysis and experience coming from the socio-economically and politically oppressed groups do bring a new hermeneutic or interpretation to the Bible, especially as regards its ethical message of social justice. The Third World ethics is a challenge to the indivi-

dualistic ethics of the First World. Moral challenges coming from a situation of oppression touch history, politics, economics and culture. They are historical challenges to develop a sense of responsibility to the effect that the situation of oppression is changed. In this challenge to historical responsibility, the Third World ethics understands, in the words of Tambasco, that "Jesus showed the absolute dimensions of a historical path but he did not show us any path as being absolute in itself." In this discussion of the First and Third World ethics there is no clear consciousness of First World's deleterious effects on Third World countries. The authors of the book evidently work from their context.

In doing biblical ethics hermeneutic is the question today. A fruitful and meaningful hermeneutic requires a critical dialogue between text and context of the Scripture and the texts and contexts of the great contemporary ethical issues. Such an approach does not seem to be within the broad horizons of this book. It emerges in a focused way only in the contribution of Tambasco which gives the impression of being an appendix to the work. We are surprised that the North American authors do not seem to have a critical analysis of their own society and the non-persons in their country. The danger of such a book is that people in the Third World may take its views uncritically, as if the authors had done the thinking for them while, in fact, they do not seem to have the critical thinking even on their own context. Thus the methodological inquiry remains largely incomplete. The great challenge of non-persons in history, for example, has not become an over-arching horizon. The book, however, has handled certain scientific questions of biblical revelation and ethics. Moreover, what it presents as the result of a task force for the study of biblical ethics is meant for the professional world of theologians and scripture scholars. It needs to be adapted to the pastoral situations of Christian communities without the technical jargon it has here.

The value of the book is that it has started a systematic examination of the method of relating Scripture and biblical revelation to the Christian moral commitment. It has placed important methodological issues before biblical scholars, theologians and the Christian community. The study must continue.

S. ANOKIARAMY, S.J.

**The Bible and People of Other Faiths.**  
By S. Wesley ARIARAJAH. *Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1985. Pp. xiv-71.*

This book has primarily in view the Protestant readership that finds it difficult to accept dialogue with other faiths as a biblically sanctioned dimension of the Church's existence and action in the world. The author shows very competently how the core of the Christian message contained in the Bible is based on God the Creator of all people and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is therefore essentially universalist. This is affirmed in spite of the few apparently restrictive texts that have been so much used by zealous "missiologists".

Much theology is encapsulated in these few fine pages written in very simple language that the ordinary reader will be able to understand. Catholics will surely profit from the book, of which we may hope to see an Indian edition. In my view, however, the attempt at discounting some of the biblical texts is not well placed; I think that a more careful inquiry into their real meaning, rather than brushing them aside as almost the "personal" theology of, e.g., Paul, would lead to more satisfactory results. The attempt to place all "exclusivist texts" on the account of John or Paul seems to conveniently ignore Mt 11:25 ff. and the parallel Lucan text.

I also think that the distinction between the claim of faith and the claim of truth "in an absolute sense" is misleading. The faith claim, not only in Christianity but also in other religions, it seems to me, is a claim of truth, indeed of the highest truth people hold. Of course, Christian theologians must insist, as Ariarajah does, that the faith claim cannot be validated in the forum of rational proof. It rests on a different evidence. But it remains a claim to truth.

Finally, I am not sure that the New Testament faith developed from an earlier affirmation of God as Saviour to a claim of Christ the Saviour. It seems that probably the development, if any, is in the opposite direction. In the Pastoral Epistles God is the Saviour. At any rate, the theology of religions and of dialogue need not go along the line of denying or bracketing the Christian faith affirmation of the role of Jesus Christ in the salvation of humanity. It can rather show that the salvific role of Christ is not incompatible with other religious mediations at their own level (as it is not

incompatible with the function of the Church community at its own level), and that this role remains operative and real even when it is not consciously acknowledged by a religious person, indeed by any person of good will. Justification by faith does not mean justification by the Christian profession of faith, but justification by God's faithful grace to humanity manifested in His making Jesus Lord. This grace is received and accepted in the response to God's call, in whatever of His manifold ways it comes to us.

These remarks, made from a Catholic perspective, in no way deny the perceptiveness and pastoral value of a book written with great sensitivity and Christian honesty. Theologians also will find in the author's line of reflexion a useful help to strengthen the biblical foundations of their rising structure called "theology of religions."

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Is one religion as good as another?** By Gavin D'COSTA. *London, Catholic Truth Society, 1985. Pp. 14. 45 pence*

This short pamphlet also deals with the theology of religions at a very popular level. Starting from the good old parable of the six blind men of Hindustan, the author goes on to explain nos. 1-3 of NA of Vatican II. One expression should have been avoided, that the church is, together with Jesus Christ, "the source and standard by which (one) comes to know and recognize all truth and holiness" (p. 8). There is a useful select bibliography at the end.

G.G.-S.

**Saint Francis. A Model for Human Liberation.** By Leonardo BOFF. *London, SCM Press, 1985. Pp. 178. £6.95.*

This book reveals to me the heart of a man struggling to live the Gospel values (ch. 3) which are above constitutions, rules or clerical control (ch. 4). To attain his ideal Francis took a radical option for the poor, did not become a cleric, and made himself "the little powerello," the "lesser brother" who could relate to the world around him in a spirit of fraternity. I see in these themes of Boff's book the outline of an adventure to integrate the wealth of the World with Poverty, the Hierarchy with the People

of God, the love of oneself with selfless service. But Francis had to pay a price for this adventure as those who read this book will discover in wonder.

For Francis poverty was the way to true freedom; true power is found on the realization of who one is; and all people are meant to live as brothers and sisters. Readers interested in liberation theology will find in chapter three a valuable spiritual foundation for their reflections. In fact the subtitle of the book printed above and the titles and subtitles of the chapters give us a clear idea of the orientation of the author. These are: 1. *Saint Francis: A Model of Gentleness and Care*; 2. *Preferential Option for the Poor: The Message of Saint Francis for Contemporary Society*; 3. *Liberation through Goodness: The Contribution of Saint Francis to the Integral Liberation of the Oppressed*; 4. *Creation of a Popular and Poor Church: The Contribution of Saint Francis to a Church of the Base*; 5. *Integration of the Negative: The Contribution of Saint Francis to the Process of Individuation*. The conclusion has as title, *Saint Francis: A Humanistic and Christian Alternative*.

The book is, therefore, quite relevant in a world where people are running after riches, power and self. It shows how Francis liberated himself and wanted his brothers around to be truly free men. There blossomed in him, harmoniously, "a gentle strength and a strong gentleness that are the brilliance and enchantment of his personality." Towards the end of Francis' life, Boff relates, his followers opposed his rule and made life difficult for him—the dark night, so to say—but, in the final analysis, the victory was for Francis.

Conrad FONSECA, S.J.

### Pastoral Theology

*Vamos Caminando. A Peruvian Catechism.* By the PASTORAL TEAM OF BAMBAMARCA. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1985. Pp. x-373 \$14.95.

The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in the Fall last year asked for a "universal catechism" to be made available to all the dioceses of the world. This book is rather a "particular catechism", born out of a concrete experience in Christian living in the small dioceses of Cajamarca,

hidden in the Andes. The text is meant as a pastoral aid for the simple peasants of that mountainous region. One may ask why it has deserved an English translation when a Quechua version may be more appropriate (perhaps it exists!). The fact is that in its very particularity the book seems to acquire the universal value proper of the Gospel.

The Catechism contains 15 units or sections divided into 170 chapters, each covering only a double page spread. The structure of each chapter is generally uniform: a photo and a story related to the life of the peasants in the Andean villages, a few "talking points" for a common discussion, a biblical passage related to the questions discussed, some concluding reflections or questions, a little poem and a biblical prayer. The aim is clearly not so much to ensure that a definite content input goes into the memories of the villagers, but to help them explore and understand the reality of their lives in the light of the faith.

The stories in the first 6 of the 15 units contains a basic analysis of the society in which the peasants live: the family, the land, the country, their relation to the city, their trials. The rest of the book follows closely the story of the life of Jesus, but always in relation to the concrete situation of the people. This forms, throughout the book, the background for the biblical study.

Those who want to understand in concrete the pastoral approach that embodies the awakening of the Latin American poor will find this catechism worth looking at. Catechists in India may be inspired to develop similar approaches, even if our social situation may demand a more complex analysis. They too may be able to say with the people, *Vamos Caminando*, "We Are on the Way". An eminently pastoral book, if ever there was one.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

*Peace Be With You. Hidden Springs to Healing.* By Sr USHA, M., S.N.D. Bombay, Asian Trading Corporation, 1985. Pp. 86. Rs. 15.

This is a book addressed to a "world wounded and broken, looking for peace, thirsting for freedom and looking for joy." To such a world Jesus is said to show the way through inner healing.



Simple in style, personal and sensitive in sharing, the book is the testimony of a group of people—a cross section of India consisting of Christians, Hindus and Muslims.

The book has five parts: Part I consists of the personal accounts of inner healing through Christ. Part II goes into the area of childhood stories and how they affect our personalities and behaviour. Our dreams and their effects are discussed in Part III. A sketchy explanation of the common symbols is also given. In Part IV broken relationships and sicknesses are discussed. Finally, in Part V, the Word of God and its role in the healing process is tackled. Exercises at periodic intervals allow the reader to experience for himself what the testimonies are driving at.

As the foreword points out, the ministry that is discussed is a blend of psychotherapy, T.A. and the healing gifts of the Holy Spirit. But at times the integration of religion and psychology is not well articulated. Many of the results claimed could be obtained by simple counselling and the use of Gestalt techniques. In other words, you do not need so much faith in Jesus as in psychological and therapeutic techniques. A non-integrated link-up between counselling techniques and religion can have far-reaching detrimental effects—of the kind

which are not absent from the charismatic movement all over the country.

The use of Scripture (for instance, in Part II, p. 45) is questionable. Interpreting a Scripture passage purely as a psychological sop to disturbed minds is an obvious injustice to the Word of God. The Scriptures have a far more radical challenge to offer. The book is interspersed with exercises, which most beginners will not be able to do on their own. Some questions arise as one reads. Why is it that most of the cases presented are those of women and priests? Is it because of the greater emotional susceptibility of these people? Why are not some cases of failures presented? We learn as much from mistakes as from success. Is not the book one more addition to the genre of "Do it yourself" and "Pep up" books?

Presenting the chart of broken relationships and sickness the authoress warns, "the chart may be used with caution and sensitivity." The caution applies the whole book. In sharing the depths of other human beings one has to be deeply respectful; but whether all that is shared is growth-provoking is a different question. One that must be left to the reader's discernment.

M.K. GEORGE, S.J.



# Vidyajyoti

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### Editorial

#### A Pastoral Visit

**T**HIS year the Catholic Church in India has passed through a special experience of spiritual renewal well before Lent: the announced pastoral visit of the Holy Father took place in early February, in a general atmosphere of much expectation and, why not acknowledge it, no little apprehension.

Apprehensions were expressed both from within and from without the Catholic community. Most of these were articulated with objectivity, and surely with good will. It is important to take stock of these objections now, after the event, and to reflect on them. The main concern expressed by many in the Church was that the visit by its very nature might involve an element of show, even of triumphalism, which ill befits the spiritual ideals proposed at the time of Vatican II and so much esteemed in the Indian tradition.

In actual fact, and within the constraints involved in the enterprise of making the presence of the Holy Father available to the millions of Indian devotees, the impression one has is that the element of pomp was generally kept within reasonable bounds. In many places, at any rate, the stress was rather on simplicity. And rightly so, in the context of a person who comes as a disciple of Jesus, in fact as the successor of the first apostle. One may assume that the fears on this point articulated by the ordinary Catholic, lay or clerical, before the visit had an influence in the policy decisions in the area of simplicity. If the assumption is correct, one cannot but rejoice that the voices

from below are somehow listened to in the Indian Church, whatever be the appearance to the contrary.

A common source of the apprehensions and even opposition to the papal visit was the ambiguity of the public office held by the Pope and therefore the ambiguity in his visit to India. For us, Catholics, he is the visible head of the Church, its focal point of unity. His role is, therefore, primarily religious. Officially, however, he was invited and received by the Government in his other capacity as head of the tiny Vatican State. The two functions and consequently the two aspects of the visit were officially kept separate, although security responsibilities did not permit an adequate division. Apart from the airport receptions and a few protocol visits, Government officials were generally not visible at the public functions he'd around the Pope. But the confusion persisted in the public mind, and it created misgivings. There is also evidently a financial dimension involved here.

This ambiguity is a necessary consequence of the present political reality of the Vatican State. Whether the burden of running such a political institution and the limitations it imposes on the actual freedom and accessibility of the papacy are compensated by the benefits the Church derives from it is a question well worth examining. Is not a different "political" set-up of the central organism of the Church conceivable? Could we not evolve to a situation wherein it would not be necessary for the children to keep a 40 feet distance to see him whom they call "Father", or for him to travel incongruously in bullet proof cars—and encased in security measures made necessary in the unfortunate climate of violence in which we live, and inevitable by the political dimensions in the Pope's figure? We are aware that the present reality is the result of the long historical development wherein many factors have been at work. But a critical re-thinking on this, after the evidence of the irritating incongruities it engenders, is neither out of place nor too late to do it.

What astonished many of us, however, was the rather virulent and persistent character of the opposition to the visit by some extremist groups. It is not that protests from such quarters were unexpected: in fact we foresaw them in our Editorial last May. What was painful and rather unexpected was the bitterness of the attack and the fact that at times it was based on patently false and propagandistic arguments—the most common being the conversion bogey. The attacks that appeared in some Hindi leaflets and newspapers were incredibly crude, surely a betrayal of the openness and generous tolerance characteristic

of the Hindu tradition. Christians were, however, reassured by the overwhelming evidence that such hostility was confined to a few groups. The majority community as a whole was most friendly and contributed a good deal to the success of the visit.

For it seems to us that it *was* a success. The Pope's graciousness and his charism for relating to people were evident in his first gestures after arrival on Indian soil and in the first words he pronounced. He easily won the hearts of those who saw and heard him, and of many who did not. What perhaps evoked our sympathy most was the fact that the Pope came to India in the spirit of dialogue, actually as a learner, as he explicitly told the bishops, open to the impact of the land he visited, its culture and its religions. As we saw him falling on his knees at the *samadhi* of the Father of the nation, our hearts missed a beat, and we were deeply moved by that simple, humble and sincere prayer.

What the Pope said on his return to Rome spelt out clearly the significance of that gesture: "I think Gandhi is still alive. He has not only remained alive, but he has remained very necessary for us, for our West", he said in an emphatic tone. "He (Gandhi) was never a Christian and he never pretended to be one but I have learned a lot from him. Christians could learn from him how to be Christian . . . I learnt a lot from him and I am not ashamed to say this" (Reuter, as quoted by the *Indian Express*, 12.2.1986).

It is true that John Paul II found in Gandhiji's life and thought a message to strengthen his own teaching on non-violence and the use of natural methods in responsible parenthood. But his respect for the Indian tradition went beyond this. He did not quote only Gandhiji: he also quoted with obvious relish Tagore, Pandit Nehru, Radhakrishnan and others, besides the ancient Upanishads. The Pope had obviously done his homework before coming to India. He was sending out a very clear message: the Church is in an era of dialogue, open to the cultural and religious values of all traditions. His accomodation to the typical expressions of Indian culture, his acceptance of the *tilak* mark on his forehead, his attitude of respect to the Indian reality as a whole, are in clear contrast to the ferocious opposition to inculturation propounded by some of our reactionary journals in the name we do not know of what kind of imagined fidelity to the magisterium! We submit that after the papal visit there is no place in the Catholic Church in India for the tone and the spirit of such journalism.

According to the reports in the newspapers and personal accounts

of those who were present at the various liturgies in different parts of the country, there was a deep experience of unity, communion and fellowship among those who attended them. Many found the liturgy a deeply religious experience of interpersonal communion and of oneness with the Lord. It had a very tangible strengthening effect on the participants. This was more so when the symbols and languages used were more in tune with the living reality of the participants.

One might still regret the fact that the Church in India, unlike its counterparts in Japan and Korea, did not explore with the Holy Father the possibility of having most of the liturgy in the local languages. While some minor cultural adaptations were made, for the most part we took the easy way out by using English in most of the liturgy in different parts of the country. Each time the Pope used the language of the place, there was warm and enthusiastic response from the people, whether the group was taking part in worship or in religio-cultural events. This response of the people has an important message for us with regard to the situation of the Church in India. In many places the Church personnel uses a language different from that of the local people. A deeper rootedness in the culture and language of the people has a great potential for the Church's meaningful and relevant presence here. It would not be too hazardous to say that a really inculturated liturgy will be a powerful tool for the proclamation of the gospel and the values of the Kingdom. The symbolic language goes much deeper than the doctrinal concept. It goes to the very heart of persons and communities. There were glimpses of this possibility at the beginning of the Delhi Mass on the second of February, when the assembled community gave a spontaneous and enthusiastic ovation at the garlanding of the Holy Father and marking his forehead with a *tilak*.

We are aware that the Indian Church has still a long way to go in the line of inculturation. In spite of our limitations, we can be legitimately proud that the face of the Church welcoming the Pope was an Indian face ornamented by the colourful variety of gifts it has inherited from the land. The dances, the decor, the prayers, the attitudes, were often beautifully Indian, with a rich variety of styles, the tribal cultures making an impressive contribution.

Regarding inter-religious dialogue proper, the Pope came to India only one week after he himself had announced, at the St Paul's Outside the Walls Basilica, his unprecedented decision to invite religious leaders of the world to meet together in Assisi in October, to

pray for peace and to dialogue on what they could do together in this area. This will probably be the first time in history that a Pope prays with leaders of other religions and sits with them around the dialogue table. In his visit to India he referred often to this initiative and took the opportunity to foster the project. To the bishops of India, in particular, he spoke of dialogue already on the day of his arrival in quite unambiguous terms: "Another matter that occupies your zeal is *inter-religious dialogue*. This too is a *serious part of your apostolic ministry*. The Lord calls you, especially in the particular circumstances in which you are placed, to do everything possible to promote this dialogue according to *the commitment of the Church*." (*Address to the Bishops* 1.2.86. Emphasis added.) During the visit he made such dialogue a primary objective which became specially articulate in the Madras meeting.

Another area which the Pope repeatedly referred to was the field of social justice with its formidable challenges. Not that he overlooked the call to a personal conversion and holiness of life: how could he have done that when he came to beatify two outstanding members of the Indian Church? But he has shown how that struggle against sin must move to those areas of the national and international life where human dignity is trampled upon and human life is made impossible by social and economic structures which crush the bodies and souls of millions of God's children. From his earliest speeches in Delhi the Pope drew our attention to this problem. The Indian Church has now to respond to this summons and move towards these horizons with determination and commitment, and support those who struggle to bring the power of the Gospel to bear on the concrete lives of people specifically in the area of justice. We need to go beyond our ecclesiastical frontiers and to engage in the battle for God's Kingdom where the stakes are particularly high.

The impression some people have voiced is that the visit remained largely a "churchy" affair, and that the Pope did not sufficiently meet other groups at all levels of the Indian society. Perhaps one of the reasons why the Pope was so much with the Christian group was the strongly pastoral, indeed sacramental character given to the visit, in the face of the opposition campaign. It is also true that this character of the visit reflects the reality of the Indian Church, especially of the Indian episcopate. How seldom is the Christian voice heard to speak on the great national (and international) problems that beset us! How feeble is the support given to those who struggle for justice! How seldom do we stand united in the face of clearly

ethical issues! We need to reflect in depth on the message of the Holy Father and move courageously towards these new horizons, even at the risk of making mistakes.

The primary theme of the visit was the call to unity. The Pope came to a clearly divided Church in need of healing. In his speeches he emphasized this theme. To the bishops he spoke clearly of the ticklish inter-rite problem and promised an early decision on the issues involved that would respect the rights and traditions of all parties concerned. Evidently, adjustments will be required from all. We may be called to venture into new forms of Christian organisation and communion to which we are not accustomed or which go against our securities. But our common task on this "God's little earth" will surely be foremost in our concerns. Perhaps we shall be united in the measure in which we are forward-looking.

Will the visit have a lasting impact? Or will the February 1986 event remain a pleasant memory in later years, pleasant but without eliciting any deep conversion, or even any serious reflection? As it is, one gets the impression that people—clerics included!—often came to see rather than to listen to the Pope! The *darshan* tradition is strong in our subconscious psyche! It is also true that perhaps the speeches prepared beforehand, although clearly after a careful study of the Indian situation, did not lend themselves to an authentic dialogue, one that responded to the words and gestures that greeted the Pope in India. Perhaps such improvised dialogue is impossible given the cultural and linguistic constraints. One spontaneous response uttered without a carefully weighing all the words could so easily be misunderstood! Given the omnipresence of the mass media the risks involved in spontaneity may not be worth taking. But whatever the doctrinal content of many of the sermons and speeches, were the majority in the audiences meeting the Pope really keen on what he said? For many, what he did, and his mere presence, were far more important.

And yet, the speeches of the Pope may be considered a solid contribution of the successor of Peter to the life of the Indian Church. It will be necessary to study them in the light of the Second Vatican Council and of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops. They will be useful pointers, not so much to tell us what to do or what not to do, but to encourage us to raise our vision to new horizons and to commit ourselves more firmly to the Gospel of love we profess.

It would be a pity if the experience of the visit resulted in the strengthening of papal adulation among Catholics. The Pope came to strengthen his brother bishops in their mission, and to learn from them the significance of the Indian experience for the universal Church. Hopefully the result of the visit will be a more confident Indian Church. The Church has shown her face on this occasion, and has experienced acceptance. Such experience cannot but lead to authentic growth.

To end, therefore, where we began. This visit has also shown us that the Church in India has to reflect deeply on and work consistently at improving its image. The impression of being a remote partner in the national fabric has not yet been erased. Maybe that at a very superficial but necessary level, we need much better organs of public relations. We need also more contact and dialogue, both within the Church, at all levels, and between the Church and the cultures in which we live. We need to dispel many prejudices, the blame for which we need not always assume, but we may not always deny either. We need to be a humble, dialogal, involved Church.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD



# A Call to Conversion

## *Reflections on the Papal Visit*

Parmananda DIVARKAR, S.J.

**B**Y the time this article appears in print, some weeks from now, the visit of Pope John Paul II to our country will be a memory. For many it will still be a vivid and inspiring memory, fed on a personal experience of participating in a meaningful celebration; with many others it will have receded into the background, yielding place to more immediate preoccupations. But whatever the range and power of the impressions that are left behind in the minds and hearts of individuals, for the Church as a whole, and for the nation, it will remain a memorable event of considerable significance for the future.

That future has already been mapped out, in broad outline, by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops that met in Rome at the end of 1985. Its task was precisely to revive the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, to review the two decades since its closure, and to plan for the years ahead, which would lead the Church into the twenty-first century and the third millennium of her history. In fact, the numerous discourses of the Pope, from Delhi to Bombay, are a catechesis on, and a practical application of, the themes that appear in the Final Report of the Synod: the Church as a mystery of communion, expressed in the liturgy, in episcopal collegiality, in the mutual relations and respective responsibilities within the ecclesial body; the proclamation of the word of God: evangelization and inculturation; ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue; the promotion of justice and peace; the cry of the disabled and the dispossessed; the dignity of the person and the family, of human culture and activity; the universal call to holiness . . . Conversely, what was said and done at the Extraordinary Synod—we shall refer to it simply as the Synod—can help to understand and assess the papal visit. Together, the two events show us a way into the future; but we must trace the path ourselves.

*India welcomes the Pope*

And first of all, a look at the facts. As these lines are being written, detailed reports and considered opinions are still coming in. But one can already get a fairly comprehensive idea of what the papal visit has been and has meant. Judging by available accounts and accepted standards, it was a remarkable success. Not that everything was perfect; but there was a convergence of happy circumstances that one would hardly have dared hope for. The only major hitch occurred after the Pope had left our soil, as he approached Rome and could not land because of heavy snowfall. When we think that just one mischievous phone call could have caused enormous delays and other inconveniences, as has happened elsewhere, we can readily forgive whatever little opposition there was—which moreover, is quite understandable and served rather to highlight the general good will and to evoke favourable reactions.

Some sections of the foreign press seem to have picked up a certain coldness or distancing on the part of our Government. For us, it is difficult to see what more our Administration, at all levels, could have done to be helpful. If the facilities that were so lavishly made available were also discretely offered, without too much fussing over the person of the Pope, that is all the more creditable. In fact, given the size of our country and the vastness of the programme, it would not be too rash to guess that no other Government and people in the world have done as much on such an occasion. The tiny Catholic minority has an immense amount to be grateful for—which includes, of course, what “we ourselves” have done so well, living up to our reputation for organizing ability and disciplined behaviour.

As for the Pope, he was at the very best of his many admirable qualities: sheer physical stamina, to begin with; his genius for languages, never so severely and successfully tested as here; his impressive and captivating personality; his showmanship, which does not detract from the deeply spiritual image that he projects. It was obvious that he had put in a great deal of preparation, and not just in the last few months. Some have remarked that while he remained true to himself and to his understanding of the papal ministry, there was a change of accent in his many speeches, something different from what one has got accustomed to—at least as it gets reported in the media. He said on arrival that he had come with the desire “to listen and learn from the men and women of this noble nation.”

*Sequel to the Visit*

All in all, it was a great experience. But it is already behind us, and the question that many are already asking is: will it bear lasting fruit, in proportion to the tremendous effort that was put into it? There is the realization that the follow-up is more important than the preparation, both spiritual and material, that our people so generously and seriously engaged in. In the course of that preparation, some misgivings were expressed (as, for instance, about the expenses involved) but they were generally discussed at a fairly high level of maturity, and without detriment to effective collaboration—quite unlike the puerile views and negative attitudes so often ventilated in our religious papers on matters like the liturgy, always a touchy issue. There is good reason to hope that whatever is done now will be taken up with a deep sense of responsibility; and that the community as a whole will resist the temptation, ever present in a minority like ours, to rest on its laurels, with the complacent thought: we have managed to do what no one else in the country could have done. Or worse still: we have all the answers; all we need is to make others realize it.

Whatever the projects that are launched in the wake of the papal visit, one important concern must be to keep the whole event, and the person of the Pope himself, in the proper ecclesial context. Contextualization was a major preoccupation of the Synod, as it meditated on the lessons of Vatican II. It was said that previous ecumenical councils had dealt with particular aspects of faith and discipline, thus incurring the danger of over-stressing them at the expense of other aspects and of a balanced global vision; Vatican II took up the whole Christian experience and brought light and life to every aspect precisely by placing it in its context. The papal office is a case in point: Vatican I concentrated on some prerogatives of the papacy, and Vatican II had to provide the total ecclesial setting of episcopal collegiality and communion in the Church. But the Synod cautioned that the teachings of Vatican II should themselves be taken in their totality and in the totality of our history: for a selective reading would lead to new regrettable imbalances, and it would seem that this had in fact happened. Obviously, the balance must be maintained at the level not of doctrine only but of life and daily experience.

When Paul VI came to us on the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress in 1964, precisely because the visit was limited in scope and extent, it had a ready-made context that was self-explana-

tory: a world gathering of Catholics was celebrating a world Liturgy presided over by the world leader—who came as a politically private person, a pilgrim like so many of his fellow-Christians. This time, it was stated and stressed (presumably to forestall rival claims to prominence) that John Paul II did not come for any special occasion but in response to an invitation of our President to the Head of the Vatican State, and of our Bishops' Conference to the Supreme Pastor—who was also pursuing his policy of systematically contacting his ubiquitous flock: 800 million strong, as the press kept reminding the public. The Pope himself was careful to explain the nature and intent of his presence among us, and to spell out his message according to the audience he was addressing. But it has been remarked on other similar occasions that at mammoth rallies what comes across to the huge crowds is not so much what he says as how he says it—his style, his powerful and attractive personality.

The people were very much taken up by the simplicity of his ways and his easy accessibility, quite unconcerned about any danger. This made the security arrangements seem irksome, for they were massive, though well organized to cause minimum inconvenience. The State could take no risks, whatever the Pope might be willing to expose himself to: he was a state guest and a Head of State. It had never come across so vividly to our citizens that the Pope is a significant political figure. That was, and remains, a puzzle and a problem: for many non-Christians, who do not see how spiritual authority is linked with temporal power; but for quite a few Catholics too, especially when there is such insistence on clerics keeping clear of secular involvement.

### *Challenges to be faced*

The second major preoccupation of the Synod (following the order of its Final Report) was to safeguard the mystery of the Church and to defend it from the intrusion of secular elements, neither in its understanding or in its functioning. Even the principle of subsidiarity was looked upon with suspicion, though it seems to be a mere matter of common sense: that an issue should not be referred to a higher instance if it can be settled at a lower level. It was agreed that subsidiarity should be theologically investigated in depth, though at first sight it looks like a problem of the Roman Curia rather than of the Mystical Body. Be that as it may, one could notice among the assembled bishops a

tendency to be extremely cautious with new ideas and models, lest they be worldly, and to accept comfortably what was traditional, as if it had all been inspired by faith, or even derived from faith. Yet we know that so many of the established practices of the Church are borrowed from eastern imperial or western feudal culture.

This may be understandable, even if not entirely justifiable, in Europe. But it creates serious difficulties in India: in fact the great obstacle for Christianity in our country has been the way we are organized and function. Mahatma Gandhi, whose ideas have been once again brought to our consciousness by the Pope, as well as other leaders, have expressed it by saying, in one way or another: Christ is not a problem; but the Church is. If we interpret in these terms the objections that were voiced against the papal visit, they could be summed up as: John Paul as a person is no problem at all; it is the way his office is conceived and exercised. According to reports, some of those who were invited for an inter-religious meeting with the Pope, politely declined because he would be dialoguing with them from a position of superiority. So the question we are asked is: are there no other ways of being Church, of being Pope? Ways that far from being worldly would be more evangelical?

Obviously, there are tremendous advantages in combining religious authority with diplomatic status; and the benefits were all too evident on this occasion. What we, and the Pope himself, were able to do so well was due in large measure to what our Government so abundantly provided. So too was it an advantage when, more than a thousand years ago, Christianity was recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire; or much later, when the missions were conducted under royal patronage. Today we regret bitterly the longterm consequences of these one-time privileges. But there is a definite danger that whilst we lament former errors, we perpetuate them in another guise. It is hard enough to shake off the burden of the past; but the task becomes impossible if we are not really and realistically determined to make a fresh start.

### *Living the Paschal Mystery*

Speaking of true renewal, the Synod makes reference to the Paschal Mystery of life through death. It calls for an assimilation of the theology of the Cross, and reminds us that inculturation is not mere external adaptation. But ultimately, what is required is not

the development of theories; the great need of the Church is the practical acceptance of what Jesus so uncompromisingly said, and did: "Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest." If the substantial Word of God made Flesh died and rose again to be Christ the Lord and Saviour, is it so outrageous to suggest that the Mystical Body of Christ and the word that it proclaims must in some sense constantly die and rise again that salvation may always be available in the world? The seed dies, but life is not lost; it appears in fuller form in a new plant, which may look different from previous plants but lives by the same life, because it comes from the same good seed. This is speaking in parables. The plain fact is that in the course of centuries the Church has associated or even identified herself with all manner of structures whose survival is a burden and not a blessing.

As far as India is concerned, we are still suffering from the connection of a large part of the Church with the colonial expansion of western Europe. It is not just a question of a surface appearance of being foreign. The problem lies deeper and cries for a radical solution: we have not grown from a seed but been transplanted. At first sight it might seem an advantage to skip the slow stages of growth that lead from conception to maturity, and to find oneself catapulted into adulthood, with all the trappings of a fully developed Church. But the laws of life can be bypassed only at the expense of vitality and eventual fertility. So it is that, by and large, the Church in India can perform impressively, as it did for the Pope, but lacks the spontaneity and creativity to face local challenges adequately.

This is a hard judgement, but not without hope for the future; for there are innovative elements at work among us, a leaven in the dough. We should, all the same, take account of what some friendly non-Christians have noticed on this occasion. They have praised our performance and our Pontiff, but the more perceptive have drawn attention to a contrast between a Pope who exudes courage and confidence and a Church that is flabby and geared to expediency. A journalist who followed the papal tour, concludes his otherwise positive reports with the comment: "It is clear that John Paul II is a strong Pope, a fighter for what he believes in, while the Catholic Church in India is quite the opposite." Whatever be the measure of truth in this statement, would it be impertinent to suppose that John Paul is effective because he is free to be himself, whilst the Church in

India is not—because having broken off her alliance with political colonialism, she is still subject to a more subtle but no less damaging ecclesial colonialism?

During the Synod many voices were raised from the young Churches of the so-called Third World, and from older ones too, saying that they could not effectively meet the problems facing them if they were not allowed to find their own solutions, if everything had to be referred to Rome for an answer. We are not a young Church, except in the sense that we have never really grown up, as explained above, but we could surely say the same about the many challenges that Pope John Paul has left behind for us. Can we commit ourselves to ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue unless we have space for action at the local level, where things can happen and not just be talked about? Can we progress in inculturation, beyond wearing national costumes on a stage for the benefit of the Pope, unless women and men of proven competence get, if not encouragement, at least the freedom to explore the meaning of faith in our own existential situation? Can we stand up as champions of religious liberty, non-discrimination, and the inalienable rights of the person, unless we can honestly say that these issues are not a problem within the Church?

Under the general heading of the Church as Communion, the Synod speaks of unity and pluriformity. The papacy is mentioned in this connection, but it is not clear how it is at the service of pluriformity. We may nevertheless hope that the far-flung personal contacts being established by the Pope, together with his charism of coming close to people, will promote both unity and diversity: we can deepen our sense of oneness in a worldwide Church and he can have a lived experience of how different we all are—not just in the way we sing and dance, but at the core of our being, where God speaks to us and we must respond to him.

The Pope can indeed help us to be more truly and fully ourselves. But he cannot tell us how to do it: that would be a contradiction, when it comes to concrete practice. Only we can know, in the light of the Holy Spirit, who we really are—as Indians and Christians, as human beings belonging to a variety of races and cultural traditions. And we—all of us, bishops and people, and whatever experts we have at our service—must affirm our distinctive identity within the universal ecclesial communion, so that it becomes in transparent reality the Catholic Church: the sacrament of the family of God's children, who are called to fellowship in freedom. And this brings us back to the

beginning of our reflections—that we must trace our own path, through the proper contextualization of a significant event, with the comprehensive vision of the Second Vatican Council, according to the programme proposed for the coming years by the Extraordinary Synod.

*Lent comes before Easter*

Is it too fanciful to suggest that there was a special providence in that the papal visit immediately preceded Lent; that the Pope left us with just a day to enter into the annual season of renewal—the Springtime of the Spirit, as it has been called? The task before us will surely extend far beyond Easter, but we can be inspired in all our efforts and struggles by the paschal faith of St Paul: “In all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us.”

The most heartening feature of the Synod was that despite grim forebodings about its outcome, and grimmer verdicts on the condition of the Church, it adopted a very positive attitude, appreciative of the present and hopeful for the future. We have every reason to do the same. We have experienced our capacity to rise up to a challenge once it faces us. Our leaders can be confident that Catholics respond generously when meaningful demands are made. Even in the area of doubt mentioned earlier, regarding finances, there seems to have been no problem; reports say that many communities overshot the target. We have wonderful potential in our people; and we can have a wonderful Church, able to shoulder responsibly the gigantic weight of her mission, in all the many fields enumerated in the papal discourses. It is not easy, but we can do it—in Him who loved us and gave himself up for us.

In the last phase of hectic immediate preparation before the arrival of the Pope, a point was well made and much appreciated, to allay the pathetically ridiculous fears of a few Hindus, who suspected that on the occasion of the papal visit, two hundred thousand would be “converted” to Christianity. They were assured that the Pope was indeed a committed evangelizer; but he was coming to convert the Catholics, not the Hindus. Now that we are launching on the follow-up of the great event, we realize more than ever that the Church in India does indeed stand in need of conversion. But we also see better than before that she cannot go about it alone. We have deepened our sense of universality and understand that the whole Church must be converted, right from the top.



The Synod took up a theme from Vatican II that had already been stressed by Paul VI: that the Church must constantly evangelize herself if she is to evangelize the world effectively; that she must be in a continual process of conversion if she would work with credibility for the conversion of the whole human race: "The evangelization of unbelievers in fact presupposes the self-evangelization of the baptized and also, in a certain sense, of deacons, priests and bishops." It would be interesting to speculate on the "certain sense" in which the Synod expects all the clergy to be evangelized. But we shall conclude here, with a fervent prayer that what Pope John Paul II has listened to and learnt, as he wished to do in this latest pastoral experience, will help him to promote renewal everywhere—so that the entire Church may attain the goal she has set herself for these final years of a century and a millennium: total fidelity to the Second Vatican Council. To quote the Synod for the last time: "Only interior assimilation and practical implementation can make the conciliar documents alive and life-giving."

# Reflections on the Pope's Visit from the View-Point of Inter-Religious Dialogue

Dr A. PUSHPARAJAN\*

**T**HE long awaited and the most acclaimed visit of Pope John Paul II to India is over. The great excitement with which the elaborate arrangements were made to make the visit memorable has now settled down. Perhaps it is time to look back on all that the Pope has done and said in order to review the impact of this visit on the Church in India and on the nation as a whole. This essay is an attempt to study it in the context of the inter-religious dialogue. At first, an effort is made to give a brief account of all that took place in this field. Next an assessment is attempted. In the process a theological reflection evolves regarding the stand the Church has to take.

## I. An Account of the Visit from the View-Point of Inter-Religious Dialogue

Pope John Paul II's visit to India was an elaborate affair, covering many intense programmes for ten days and extending to fourteen cities throughout the length and breadth of the subcontinent. A religious head that he is, John Paul's main concern was his own flock. Obviously, therefore, his addresses were mainly directed to the Catholics. Far from trying to separate them from the rest of the great Indian family, he always exhorted them to live in peace and harmony with other religious communities.<sup>1</sup> He told them that it was their special responsibility "to promote dialogue and understanding among all."<sup>2</sup> He even told the CBCI that they had "to do everything possible to promote this dialogue according to the commitment of the

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1. Cf. the Pope's homilies at Mangalore, Madras and Campal, Goa. (See *The Hindu*, 7.2.86; *Indian Express* 6.2.86 and 7.2.86).

2. Cf. his homily at Campal, Goa. (See *Indian Express* 7.2.86).

Church."<sup>3</sup> He appealed for religious collaboration in eliminating the evils of society, like hunger, poverty, ignorance and discrimination.<sup>4</sup> He also told them that they must be acquainted with their cultural heritage. They should no longer be extraneous to the society in which they live. The Gospel has to be incarnated in their culture.<sup>5</sup> They should rather work for their culture, language, the justice and progress of the nation.<sup>6</sup> Each of the addresses he delivered at the different halts of his "Indian Pilgrimage" fell in line with his general theme of his visit: "The Call to Unity".<sup>7</sup> The very choice of the theme assumes immense significance against the background of the numerous divisive forces operative in the country on the basis of language, customs, culture, region and religion.

The Pope met also leaders from various faiths and ideologies. As a supporter of nuclear disarmament and champion of human rights, he expressed his deep appreciation for the efforts of Indian leaders for world peace and for the eradication of poverty and injustice.<sup>8</sup> He also emphasized his sincere interest in all the religions of India—an interest marked by genuine respect, by attention to what we have in common, by a desire to promote inter-religious dialogue and fruitful cooperation between people of different faiths".<sup>9</sup> He further said he "was interested in meeting as many as possible and was eager to "learn from you and from your experience of life."<sup>10</sup>

It is of great importance that the Pope described his visit as a "pilgrimage of goodwill and peace".<sup>11</sup> It is of great significance that he wanted to begin the pilgrimage at the Raj Ghat. For, to put it in his own words, "the peace and justice . . . will only be achieved along the path which was at the core of his (Gandhiji's) teaching."<sup>12</sup> After placing a wreath at the *samadhi*, the Pope stood in silence for a few moments, and then knelt down in prayer. So intense was his meditation for about six minutes that he had to be gently reminded that he was behind schedule. Never in the history of the Church did a

3. *The Hindu* 2.2.1986.

4. Cf. his second day speech in New Delhi (*Indian Express* 3.2.86).

5. Cf. homily at Shillong (*Indian Express* 5.2.86).

6. Cf. homily on the Marina beach, Madras. (See *The Hindu*, 6.2.86).

7. For a brief over-view of the Pope's visits with the main and special themes at each place, please see *The Examiner*, Bombay, February 1, 1986, pp. 111 and 116.

8. Cf. His speech at Palam Airport, New Delhi. (See *The New Leader*, 9.2.1986).

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid* (*Indian Express*, 2.2.86).

11. Cf. speech at Raj Ghat (*Indian Express* 3.2.86).

12. *Ibid.*

Pope pray at the tomb of a "non-Christian". This showed that he really meant what he said. Earlier, at the ceremony when India's new ambassador to the Vatican, Ashoke Sen Chib, presented his credentials, the Pope expressed the hope that his visit would "make clear my heartfelt respect for the spiritual traditions which so characterise your nation's history."<sup>13</sup> Now, at the Raj Ghat, he really showed the supreme respect to the greatest of the spiritual leaders of modern India. Not only that. As he was eager to meet as many leaders as possible from other religious groups of India, arrangements were made for him to meet them in small groups in cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Cochin.

The inter-religious meeting in the Rajaji Hall, Madras, is perhaps of unique significance. The Pope met there some 200 people representing the millions of the followers of various religions in the entire country. Among those who were present, some had come from Punjab, Aligarh, Ajmer, Hyderabad, Bombay, Mangalore, Kerala and from various parts of Tamilnadu. Besides, there were some educationists and philosophers. This was the first time in his life, and in the history of the Church, that the Pope officially delivered a message to members of so many religions: Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. The very welcome given to him was in the socio-religious style of India. The traditional *nadaswaram* music greeted his arrival. As he alighted from the "Pope-mobile", he was given the *bharatanatyam anjali*. At the entrance of the Hall, he was offered *mangal arati*, *poorna kumbam*, *paneer*, *kalkandu* and sandal paste. In addition to this, the chanting of the hymn *asato ma sat gamaya* added a Vedic flavour to the whole atmosphere. The entire hall was elegantly decorated with wall hangings of the different religious symbols and the sublime sayings from the various scriptures. Prominently displayed were two quotations, one from *Thiruvassagam* on unity, and another from the *Rig Veda* on dialogue. And the Pope carefully read them before he took his seat on the dais.

From the participants' side, Mr. A.K.A. Abdul Samad offered the Pope a gorgeous *ponnadai* in a typically Islamic style, displaying the crescent and a star in a row all along the borders of the shawl. The Pope willingly wore it throughout his address. Similarly,

13. As quoted by George Menezes, "Pope Will Convert Catholics, Not Hindus", in *The Examiner*, February 1, 1986, p. 106.

Sri Swaminatha Thambiran Swamigal from Dharmapuram Adheenam also offered a *ponnadai* but along with it he smeared "*vibhudi*" on the Pontiff's forehead too. Displaying the holy ash on his forehead, the Pope freely mingled with the various religious representatives, greeting them at the end of the meeting. Fr Ignatius Hirudayam, consistent with his experimentation at inculturation in *Aikya Alayam*, Dialogue and Research Centre, Madras, followed a typical Indian style of showing his reverence to the Holy Father. He bowed low and touched the feet of the Pope, instead of the usual way of kneeling down and kissing his ring. The memento was also befitting the occasion: a wood-carving in the form of a leaf of a pital tree with a wheel at the centre. The wheel, representing the *dharma chakra*, had eight axles in the form of peacock feathers, in the eyes of which were engraved the motifs of the eight religions whose members were present there.

On his part the Pope expressed his happiness in seeing the people from the various religions of Bharat. He said he was "longing to visit India, the land of many religions, and of a rich cultural heritage,"<sup>14</sup> and that he had looked forward to this meeting. He paid high tributes to India for its overwhelming *sense of the primacy of religion, the quest for the Absolute, the quest for God*.<sup>15</sup> These tributes were not offered purely in his personal capacity. "The Catholic Church recognises the truths that are contained in the religious traditions of India," he said. He quoted the words of his own Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, which itself makes a reference to the Vatican II's document on Non-Christian Religions: it "is filled with deep esteem for the great spiritual values, indeed for the primacy of the spiritual which . . . finds expression in religion and then in morality, with direct effects on the whole of culture."<sup>16</sup> Now, reiterating the same stand, he said: "Here today the Church wishes to voice again her true appreciation of the great heritage of the religious spirit that is manifested in your cultural tradition. The Church's approach to other religions is one of genuine respect; with them she seeks mutual collaboration."<sup>17</sup> It is "this recognition", the Pope said, which "makes dialogue possible."<sup>18</sup>

14. The Pope's speech at Rajaji Hall, Madras. p. 13/1 (emphasis is the Pope's).

15. *Ibid.*, p. 13/2.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 13/2. Cf. also *Redemptor Hominis* No. 11.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 13/2.

18. *Ibid.*

Further, the Pope explained that "Dialogue between members of different religions increases and deepens mutual respect and paves the way for relationships that are crucial in solving the problems of human suffering."<sup>19</sup> "Dialogue is a means of seeking after Truth and of sharing it with others."<sup>20</sup> "By dialogue, we let God be present in our midst."<sup>21</sup> As followers of different religions, he stressed, we should join together in promoting and defending common ideals in the sphere of religious liberty, human brotherhood, education, culture, social welfare and civic order.<sup>22</sup> He observed that the spirit of tolerance which has always been part of the Indian heritage is not only desirable but imperative in the context of religious pluralism.<sup>23</sup> He added that the Church also teaches the religious freedom of the human person, meaning that nobody should be coerced to act against his convictions or prevented from acting in accordance with his convictions in religious matters, whether privately or publicly.<sup>24</sup>

The Pope concluded the speech with a prayer that the remarkable sense of "the sacred" which characterises the Indian culture may penetrate the minds and hearts of all human beings everywhere.<sup>25</sup>

## II. An attempt at Assessment

Even a rapid glance over the foregoing will show that the deeds and words of the Pope in respect to inter-religious dialogue have been clearly confirmatory to the change of attitude Vatican II initiated towards other religions. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church acknowledged the "many elements of sanctification and of truth"<sup>26</sup> "found outside the visible structures of the Church."<sup>27</sup> This was so much evident in the Pope's approach that he freely quoted the "many elements of Truth" from the Indian people, such as Gandhi, Tagore, Pattinathar. And he paid high tributes to the spiritual values found in the Indian culture. He extolled the Mahatma as an extraordinary light that illumined the path of several leaders outside India. He even made a solemn proclamation of his profound conviction that "the peace and justice of which contemporary society

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19. *Ibid.* p. 13/4.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.* p. 13/5.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

27. *Ibid.*

has such great need will only be achieved along the path which was at the core of his teaching: the supremacy of the spirit and satyagraha, the "truth-force", which conquers without violence by the dynamism intrinsic to just action."<sup>28</sup>

The Decree on Missionary Activity enjoins the Christians to establish relations of respect and love with the members of the group in which they live, and to share in their social and cultural life, and be familiar with their national and religious tradition.<sup>29</sup> It also asks the congregation of the faithful, endowed with the cultural riches of its own nation, to be deeply rooted in the people.<sup>30</sup> In the light of these statements of Vatican II the Pope's repeated appeals to the Indian Christians to work for their culture, language and the progress of the nation,<sup>31</sup> etc., seem nothing new. There is nothing strange then in his deep interest in the art, architecture, literature and customs of India and also in his willing<sup>32</sup> acceptance of the socio-religious welcomes given to him in various cities<sup>33</sup> in the typically traditional styles of India. *Ad Gentes*<sup>34</sup> as well as *Lumen Gentium*<sup>35</sup> express the Church's readiness to preserve, purify and perfect whatever good is found even in the religious rites and customs of peoples. So no wonder that some of the Indian rituals were incorporated in the Papal Mass in some cities.

The pontiff hailed the pluralistic society of India as unity in diversity. He praised the Indian Constitution and its official recognition of religious liberty.<sup>36</sup> But all this was possible for him because the Declaration of Religious Freedom of Vatican II had already affirmed unambiguously that "the human person has a right to religious freedom."<sup>37</sup> This freedom, according to the document, "means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters

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28. Cf. *The New Leader*, 9th February 1986. p. 1.

29. *Ad Gentes*, 11.

30. *Ibid.* 15.

31. Cf. footnote 6, *supra*.

32. Not only did the Holy Father not show any resentment anywhere but also said that he came to India with a deep desire to pay honour to the people of India and its different cultures. (See *Indian Express* 22.86). This explains his "willingness" to accept the welcome given at various places in the local cultural mode.

33. For instance, Ranchi, Shillong, Calcutta, Madras, Cochin.

34. Cf. art. 9.

35. Cf. art. 17.

36. Cf. the Speech at Palam Airport, New Delhi, (*Indian Express* 22.1986).

37. Art. 2.

religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs."<sup>38</sup>

One point about Pope John Paul is that in many of his addresses he indicated that inter-religious dialogue has to be directed towards the solution of common problems of humanity like injustice. "The main subject of inter-religious collaboration," he said, "must be the attainment of the preservation of all human rights."<sup>39</sup> It must also concern itself with the "struggle to eliminate hunger, poverty, ignorance, persecution, discrimination and every form of enslavement of the human spirit."<sup>40</sup> He also called upon the people to "live in peace and harmony with each other in mutual acceptance and co-operation."<sup>41</sup> And he urged the mute millions of India and elsewhere to speak against the arms' race, hypocritical forms of imperialism, and inhuman ideologies.<sup>42</sup> But all these issues of peace and injustice were already given priority in the Council. In its Opening Message itself the Council proclaimed to the world its concern for the sufferings of modern men and pinpointed two issues of special urgency: peace and social justice.<sup>43</sup>

From the above, it is clear that, although Pope's visit to India has really confirmed the Church's dialogal approach initiated by Vatican II, yet it has not taken any step further than those of Vatican II. However, it is greatly satisfying to note that there has been no retrograde step from Vatican II. This leaves room for further theological reflection, experimentation and formulations regarding inter-religious dialogue.

### III. A Reflection

If one is justified in drawing the above conclusion (that Pope John Paul's visit to India has done nothing more than confirm the position of Vatican II in respect of dialogue with other religions), then the prospects of the Church's dialogue with other religions do not seem bright, for there was a certain amount of ambivalence in the position of Vatican II. It is true that Vatican II was really respon-

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38. *Ibid.*

39. Speech at the "Religio-cultural Experience" in New Delhi (*The Hindu*, 3.2.1986).

40. *Ibid.*

41. Cf. speech at Mangalore and at Campal. (See *The Hindu* 7.2.1986, and *Indian Express*, 7.2.1986).

42. Cf. speech at Calcutta (*The Hindu*, 5.2.1986).

43. Cf. W.M. ABBOT (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, pp. 6-7.



sible for an official change of attitude towards other religions. Yet it is also true that it did not completely give up the traditional notions of "conquest". Vatican II formally recognized the presence of many elements of sanctification and truth in other religions.<sup>44</sup> But the same Vatican II asserted that they were all "*gifts properly belonging to the Church*"<sup>45</sup> and that "whatever good or truth is found among the religions is a *preparation for the Gospel*."<sup>46</sup>

The very same ambivalence of Vatican II seems to be reflected in John Paul II too. For instance, in his Calcutta speech the Pope, paying high tributes to the great statesmen, leaders, eminent spokesmen of the aspirations and ideals of the Indian people, artists, poets, reputed religious thinkers like R. Tagore, said: "The Church holds them in esteem together with the religions which they represent." So far, so good. Then quoting Pope Paul VI, he added; "They carry within them in echo of thousands of years of searching for God. They possess an impressive patrimony of deep religious texts. They have taught generations of people how to pray. They are all impregnated with innumerable *seeds of the Word*, and can constitute a *true preparation for the Gospel*."<sup>47</sup>

This is precisely what the members of other religions cannot accept. They rightly feel that their religious insights, and their means of sanctification are not given a recognition in their own right. They vehemently resist the idea that their religion is considered a preparation for the work of evangelization by another religion and that, too, "a religion of recent and alien origin." If the Church cannot accept other religions in India as equal, if not superior, to Christianity, then the positive attitude of the Church towards non-Christian religions is bound to be suspect. Our religious friends are led to think that the dialogal move of the Church is only a subtle way of conversion and conquest. "As Christianity has no more a position of power or prestige which she enjoyed for a number of centuries under the patronage of the political powers of the past, as she does not wield any more power to start a crusade or organize an inquisition, she has been forced to enter into dialogue with other religions. This is indeed a dubious way of conquest which we must be beware of!" This is how many Hindu friends have sincerely expressed their reactions in our dialogue meetings with them.

44. Cf. foot-note 26 *supra*.

45. *Lumen Gentium*, 8. Emphasis has been added.

46. *Ibid*, 16. Emphasis has been added.

47. *The Hindu* 5.2.1986.

Sometimes they interpret the Church's attempts at inter-religious dialogue as merely a question of survival. The whole world today has acquired liberal ideas and is imbued with a democratic spirit. If the Church does not fall in line with this spirit, she will be a misfit in the contemporary world. Thus it is only the needs of the time which force the Church to take to inter-religious dialogue. But there is really no change in her fundamental position of "exclusivism", attributing superiority to herself and attempting to convert others into her visible boundaries.

If the Church wants to avoid such misgivings about her dialogal spirit, then she cannot be satisfied with passing some palliative remarks about other religions. Nor is it sufficient to admire the great spiritual personalities of other religions as the Pope has done in his recent visit to India. But, rather, she should come forward to accept the great religions of the world on a par with herself. She should come out with an authoritative declaration of the fundamental equality of all religions. So the essential question before the Church today is: can she accept the equality of religions?

Of course, there can never be equality among religions in terms of doctrines, beliefs, their rituals and other practices. All these elements of religion are obviously different from religion to religion. But this does not mean that any one of the religions can claim to be superior exclusively in terms of either doctrine or belief, worship or any other practice. All great religions are equal to one another in a fundamental sense. I have already worked out elsewhere<sup>48</sup> that a fundamental equality of religions can be indicated in three ways: (1) In as much as religions have actually produced "saints" of similar heights or even of parallel types, they *all contain Truth*. (2) The Truth found in every religion, is also *alloyed with untruth* or imperfection, if not for any other reason than human fallibility. (3) Thus in so far as every religion has both truth and untruth, every religion has the necessity as well as *the ability to "grow" constantly* from untruth to Truth, from imperfection to Perfection. Unless the equality of religions is accepted by all the dialogue partners, there can never be a genuine dialogue among religions.

Even a cursory glance at the history of the Church's attitude to other religions will show that there is of late, a definite change for

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48. A. PUSHPARAJAN, "Prospects of Christian Dialogue with other Religions", in *Journal of Dharma*, Bangalore, vol. VIII, No. 3, July-September 1983, pp. 248-269.

the better. For centuries it was considered that she was the sole repository of Truth and that she alone could produce saints. All other religions were viewed as wholly imperfect, if not the stronghold of darkness. She was the only "citadel of Salvation" and a "Life-saving boat." The only way to save people was to convert them into her version of the Truth. It was indeed a unique gift of Providence that around the middle of the 20th century, when the whole world was witnessing the birth of a new phase of its history, the "Good Pope" John XXIII was elected as the head of the Church. With his characteristic openness of mind and goodness of heart, he inaugurated a new age—an age of "openness" of the Church to the modern world. Again, it is he who convened the epoch-making Second Vatican Council. Pope Paul VI was indeed a worthy successor of John XXIII. For not only did he continue the Council's work with a sustained spirit of openness to the world but also directed the Council's deliberation by specifying the areas in which the Church must engage in dialogue with others. He also instituted the Papal Secretariat for Non-Christians Religions, which has been arduously working for promoting a genuine dialogue with other religions. The immense progress the Church could make in the field of inter-religious dialogue was possible only because Pope Paul VI lavished such a "deep love, interest and inspiration"<sup>49</sup> on the Secretariat. When the present Pope assumed office there were certain reservations in the minds of quite a few members of the Secretariat. They were rightly troubled with the question: "Will the Secretariat continue to enjoy a similar attention and care?" But John Paul II dispelled their doubts saying: "The non-Christian world is indeed constantly before the eyes of the Church and of the Pope. We are truly committed to serve it generously. . . . It is my hope and my desire that commitment to dialogue should be strengthened throughout the Church, including the countries where there is a Christian majority."<sup>50</sup> Since then, he has on various occasions emphasised the importance, the reasons and the goals of inter-religious dialogue. Once he said: "In fact, no one can fail to see the importance and the need which inter-religious dialogue assumes for all religions and all believers."<sup>51</sup> Particularly he has personally cherished a great appreciation for the spiritual traditions of India.<sup>52</sup>

49. Cf. *Bulletin*, Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, Rome, Nos. 41-42 (1979), Vol. XIV/2-3, p. 79.

50. *Ibid*, pp. 79-80.

51. *Bulletin*, no. 56 (1984), vol. XIX, 2, p. 122.

52. For instance, in his speech at Palam Airport in New Delhi the Holy

It is not without significance that the present Pope chose almost the same words of his predecessor, Paul VI, for describing his visit to India: a "pilgrimage".<sup>53</sup> A pilgrimage is usually understood as a journey to a sacred place with the purpose of obtaining some special grace or favour. The visit of the Pope to India was doubtless meant to be a pilgrimage in this sense. For, this is the land where St Thomas the Apostle founded the Christian community, and his tomb is enshrined in Madras. This is the land of Mahatma Gandhi whom the Pope himself described as the "apostle of non-violence."<sup>54</sup> This is the land of Thiruvalluvar, the great poet and seer of a universalist religion. This is the land of *rishis* and ascetics who valued the spiritual over the material. This is the land where even the common man's life is woven with numerous rituals, prayers and penances. Thus, the Pope's description of his visit as a pilgrimage is itself a great honour done to India and the Indian religions.

The concept "pilgrim" is much broader in its connotations when it is applied to the Church. And it had already been applied to the Church by Vatican II.<sup>55</sup> It will be beneficial to unravel the varied meanings of this symbol. To recognize oneself as a pilgrim implies first of all that one is on a journey to a sacred place. To be a pilgrim means, further, that one is determined to reach the goal of seeing the shrine. But one knows one is only on one's way and has not yet reached the goal. Hence to say that the "Church is pilgrim" implies that the Church is on a journey towards the goal—the eschaton. No doubt she has a foretaste and even a guarantee of it in the person of the Risen Master. But still she is aware of the fact that she is yet to realize the Resurrection in herself. She knows she is not yet the "perfect community" she longs to be. She is only moving towards becoming one. So the immediate corollary is that the Church must make an open acknowledgement of the fact that though she *has already* the Truth in the person of Christ, she *has not yet* realized the Truth in herself.

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Father said that he had a deep interest in the various cultures of India, and its art, architecture, literature and customs. Cf. *Indian Express*, 2.2.1986.

53. Note the words of Pope Paul VI uttered on the occasion of his visit to the International Eucharistic Congress, Bombay, 1964: "We come as a pilgrim: a pilgrim of peace, of joy, of serenity and of love. We greet all the Indian people, every man, woman and child." Cf. *38th International Eucharistic Congress, Bombay-India 1964, Vol I, Narrative*, Bombay, Examiner Press, p. 81.

54. This expression is that of the Pope himself. Cf. his speech at Raj Ghat, New Delhi.

55. *Lumen Gentium* Arts. 8, 48-50.

Another corollary of the pilgrim concept as it is applied to the Church is the recognition of the "fellow pilgrims," namely, the other religions of the world. True, they are all imperfect (as the missionaries in the past rightly perceived it). But many of the missionaries failed to perceive that the Church was also imperfect and that other religions also had the Truth. Anyway, today it is accepted as a truth beyond doubt that they also have Truth, which is established by the "fact of the saints" in their own boundaries. That means that they too *have already* the foretaste of the eschatological perfection, although they also *have not yet* attained to the totality of it.

Thus, the Church's acceptance of the "pilgrim" concept should mean two things: (1) As opposed to her traditional claim about herself, viz., that she alone possesses the Truth, and that "she is the *only inheritrix of Perfection*", she should now accept that she has only a glimpse of Truth and that she is only in *search* of full Perfection. (2) As against her traditional understanding of other religions, viz., that they were all imperfect, if not even erroneous, the Church should now accept that they too have the glimpse of Truth as well as the foretaste of Perfection.

To put it differently, acceptance of the pilgrim concept means a realization that all religions are in search of the full Truth and moving towards the total Perfection. This realization in turn should make us accept that all pilgrims are equal, of course only in a fundamental sense. No pilgrim is superior to any other, in respect of being a pilgrim. In one word, our analysis of the pilgrim concept also substantiates my contention that the Church must accept the fundamental equality of religions as a prerequisite for a meaningful and fruitful dialogue with other religions.

### *Concluding Remarks*

(1) The whole of our reflection above, and particularly our discussion on the pilgrim concept, leads us to one and the same conclusion, viz. that the Church must come out with an open acknowledgement of and an authoritative declaration on the fundamental equality of all religions. This alone will place her dialogal ventures above suspicion. It is only on this assumption that inter-religious dialogue will be fruitful, resulting in mutual enrichment of the Church and the non-Christian religions.

(2) Pope John Paul II seemed to be determined to follow the spirit

of openness to other religions set forth by John XXIII and continued by Paul VI and Vatican II, and sustained by the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions. Particularly his recent visit to India has given him many an opportunity to express his deep appreciation of the Indian religions and cultures and of the great spiritual leaders of India. All along his visit he was eager to meet the followers of other religions, and met them in an extremely cordial and free atmosphere.

(3) Nevertheless, the Pope does not seem to have taken any step further than that of Vatican II. He has not resolved the "ambivalent" attitude of Vatican II towards other religions. About *Nostra Aetate*, which devoted the first part of the Document to spelling out the spiritual values of other religions, it was remarked that it was "very very weak", as it is "confined to polite remarks" and has not come to grips with essential questions. It may not be unjustified to apply the same remark to Pope John Paul II.

(4) People who have been sincerely interested and involved in inter-religious dialogue for more than a decade have experienced the touch of God deep in their soul by allowing the faith-experience of others to take deeper roots in their own hearts, along with their own traditional experience. They are now aware of "contuition"—a group-intuition or a community-experience (as against the past understanding of religious "intuition", as a personal, individualistic, traditional insight). The new realization of the fact of "*contuition*"<sup>56</sup> is itself a concrete proof of the fact of the fundamental equality of religions!

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56. I am indebted to Rev. Fr Ignatius Hirudayam S.J. for this expression which he used in a personal conversation with me.

# The Press and the Papal Visit: Sample Soundings



## I. THE HINDI PRESS

To the custodians of the Hindi press the visit of Pope John Paul II to India (February 1-10, 1986) presented chance of a lifetime to vent their hostility to Christianity no less than their hare-brained knowledge about this 2000 year-old religion in the sub-continent. From their prejudiced minds and fertile imaginations they brought out such half-truths and concocted facts that after reading them one gets the impression that Hindi newspapers and journals are really meant for nincompoops. This does no service to Hindi whose votaries want it to be our common language.

Among the weeklies *Dharmayug*, *Dinman*, *Saptahik Hindustan* and *Ravivar* had wide coverage on Christianity and the papacy. Dailies like *Jansatta* and *Aaj* did not lag far behind. But the nature of the topics and the time chosen, the way of presentation, and the kind of accusations made showed a great slippancy in treating the papal visit and flouted the secular character of independent India. To understand this vehement negative reaction of the Hindi press one has to get a glimpse of the relationship between the Hindi belt and Christianity.

### *Christianity in the Hindi Heartland*

Since Christianity came to the Hindi belt in the shadow of the colonial power, it still remains for the Hindi mind an unacceptable intruder. Apart from its colonial colour, the exclusive association of Christianity with the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes of the region has also alienated it from the vociferous section of the Hindu community whose caste complex is no more a secret. This section of the Hindi Hindu tolerates the Church because of its useful educational institutions and hospitals. But it has not developed any appreciation for Christianity as a religion, or for its egalitarian values. Many people at the helm of the Church mistake the Hindi Hindu's appreciation of the Church-run educational institutions and hospitals for an appreciation of the Church itself.

If after about 300 years of existence in the Hindi heartland Christianity still remains a guest, it is time that the enlightened Christians of the region do something about it. Ways and means must be sought to bring out this religion into the public arena instead of keeping it secluded from the common life of the region.

How can this be achieved? I propose three ways. First, by encouraging more and more Christians to engage in public life, for example, politics. Second, by giving incentives to the Hindi Christians to produce secular literature in Hindi—it can be fiction or non-fiction. So far only one Indian Christian has made any notable mark on the Hindi secular literary world. He is Robin Shaw Pushp, a noted Hindi short-story writer and novelist. A third way will be by plunging into the media enterprise, such as publishing a secular newspaper or other journals in Hindi. A secular newspaper will be a powerful instrument to project the right image of Christianity as well as to defend genuine human causes. The remark of an elderly American Jesuit who has mastered Hindi very well is correct: "The Church has plenty of money to buy bricks and cement but no money to print a book or publish a decent journal."

Whatever may be the efforts of the Church to come into the common stream of the Hindi belt, there will be obscurantist forces trying to show Christianity in a bad light. This should not dissuade the Church authorities from playing a reasonable role in making Christianity and Christians respectable and acceptable among the Hindi public. Otherwise the Hindi belt will continue its psychological opposition to Christianity. The outpourings in the Hindi press on the occasions of the papal visit were manifestations of this opposition. Let us take a look at them.

### *Time and Subject*

In a meeting organized at Sapru House, New Delhi, on 28 January 1986, to protest against the papal visit, one of the speakers lamented: "We are getting co-operation from the Hindi press but not from the English press. Let us pray that God may give good sense to the English press." One can understand the full implication of this statement by comparing the materials published in the Hindi and in the English press about the papal visit. For whatever reasons, the English press in India had a balanced attitude in the selection of materials and the style of coverage. This was also more or less true in the case of other language papers and magazines.



But the themes presented by the Hindi press betrayed its bias. The Pope's visit is a time-bomb, it will encourage separatism, the Church activities in the North-Eastern region and Chotanagpur are dangerous to the territorial integrity of India, Christianity spreads Western culture, it uses foreign money to allure and convert the weaker sections, there was bungling in the Vatican bank, the Pope has nothing to do with humanitarian activities, the alleged murder of Pope John Paul I, the Papacy's silent support of Hitler, the corruption in the Church, rich Christianity is buying the poor, the Vatican not sympathetic to the Third World—these are the types of subjects and ideas that figured in the Hindi press to "honour" the papal visit.

I do not mean that the Hindi press has no right to expose the black side of the Church. Nor do I think all the ideas and topics mentioned above are wrong. Whatever may be the falsity and genuineness of the topics, it was unfortunate to bring them out for an occasion when about 3 per cent of secular India's people were getting ready for a solemn event in their lifetime. Right topics can be written about at the wrong time, and perhaps wrong topics at right time. In the case of the papal visit the Hindi press managed to have wrong topics at the wrong time!

### *The Way of Presentation*

The bias of a newspaper or any other journal can be gauged from the way it presents a story. The way the Hindi press projected the stories clearly shows its anti-Christian attitude. The Calcutta based Hindi weekly *Ravivar* of January 19-25, 1986, had the Pope's colour photo on the cover with this caption: *Khatarey ki ghantee hai Pope ki yatra!* In translation it would mean, "The Pope's Tour is a Danger-Bell". Such a title on the cover would definitely give to the readers of this much circulated Hindi weekly the impression that the Pope and Christianity imply an imminent danger. Out of its 82 pages, this weekly had devoted 22 pages to the papal visit and related topics and much in these pages concentrated on flinging mud at the Church and its activities.

The titles of the inside stories indicate this bias. Some instances: "Missionaries Spreading Hatred in Chotanagpur," "The Caravan of Christianity Goes to the Third World," "Bungling of Crores in the Vatican Bank," "Christian Missionaries Want to Break Up India."

The daily *Jansatta* published a full-page article (January 21, 1986) under the title "The Storm of Religious Conversion in Madhya Pradesh." This article was highly negative. The weekly *Dinman* (February 8-6, 1986) had a cover story on the papal visit. In the same way other weeklies like the *Dharmayug* (February 2-8, 1986) and the *Saptahik Hindustan* (February 9-15, 1986) had also cover stories on the papal visit. Though they did not give a completely negative coverage, nevertheless these weeklies presented Christianity in a bad light. They published the positive and the negative aspects in such a way that the negative slant was evident.

The only pleasant exception to this negative coverage was the Hindi journal *Maya* (February 15, 1986). It had a special report of 8 pages with four colour and four black and white photos. The article written by Prabal Maitra had no negative slant and gave a fairly good information about Catholicism and the Papacy. The author also showed his familiarity with the typical Hindi terms used by the Catholics.

### *The Result: Alienation*

The unwarranted anti-Christian propaganda spewed out by the Hindi press on the occasion of the papal visit has done much damage to the unity and integrity of India. Hindi Christians will feel alienated because the Hindi press labelled them as foreigners and anti-nationals. For the Catholics of the Hindi belt, the Pope's visit to Delhi and Ranchi was a most important religious event. For it was the first ever visit of a Pope to the Hindi heartland. Unfortunately, instead of using this opportunity to promote national integration, the Hindi press misused it to trumpet the papal visit as dangerous and Christians as cultural misfits.

In an unsigned article entitled "Reactions of India to the Pope" *Saptahik Hindustan* (February 9-15, 1986 page 40) quotes the view of a Christian on the ridiculous reactions to the papal visit: "Perhaps even when the naval fleets of Britain, France, and Portugal had reached the Indian coast people might not have raised so much hue and cry."

Such outpouring of this press against the Christians on the occasion of the papal visit not only has given them a feeling of being rejected by the national mainstream but it has also filled them with

contempt for the Hindi press itself. This contempt for the Hindi press might eventually end up in a disdain for Hindi itself. This would have deadening effect on the sense of belonging to the common cultural stream of the region on the part of the Hindi Christians. Already a kind of disdain has set in. What a Roman Catholic Hindi teacher from Bihar remarked after reading *Ravivar* (January 19-25, 1986) is an indication. Alluding to its inane accusations and negative reactions the teacher remarked: *andha kukur batasey bhoonkey* — when the dog becomes blind it barks even at a gentle breeze. I hope Udayan Sharma, Ramsevak Srivastav, Rajkumar Singh, Jitendra Gupta, Mahesh Pandey and Anand Shankar who used the Hindi press to demonstrate their specious patriotism and the alleged anti-nationalism of the Indian Christians will reflect on the import and significance of this comment.

Arun SUDEEP

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## II. THE INDIAN ENGLISH PRESS

Before Pope John Paul II could visit India, there was much discussion and controversy which led to both jubilation and opposition to his visit. The English language national newspapers, however, while taking into account the apprehension, controversy and even opposition of what were later termed as "fringe groups," looked with confidence toward the contribution the Pope's visit could make to India and her peoples.

This confidence was based on Pope John Paul's background and actions, statements and speeches which continually pleaded that personal dignity and freedom, human rights, and religious freedom be upheld. In his statements and speeches he also stood fearlessly against social injustice and nuclear weaponry, championed the cause of the downtrodden, and respected thought systems, philosophies and cultures different from those in Christianity. In all this he has appealed to Catholics and to peoples of other religious traditions. He showed himself a man of moral conviction "who restored elemental things."

When the pope did visit India, the Indian English language press found that he did not betray its confidence in him. It reported that

on landing in India, he "hailed the Indian system of 'pluralist society,'" which through constitutional guarantees "honoured the dignity of each person in his or her most sacred dimension and allowed the promotion of spiritual values." In acknowledging "India's age-old sense of the sacred", his own spiritual indebtedness to Indians like Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, and in his advice to the Catholic community that they take to heart their teachings and example which are in accordance with the Gospel, he dramatically accepted the existence of spirituality and wisdom outside the Catholic Church and conveyed a sincere appreciation for the wonders of India. His consistent effort to speak to the peoples of India in at least a few words of their own languages was often mentioned by the press and it showed his deep affection for the Indian Catholics and the honour and respect he had for India. The meeting with major heads of the many religious groups in India at the Rajaji Hall in Madras, the private meetings with the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and his plea to Indian bishops that they make serious efforts to promote inter-religious dialogue, brought to the fore the sincerity of his desire to promote union through dialogue. Finally, by recognizing the spiritual vision of man which India offers and by applauding "the efforts of Indians to relieve the burden of misery and overcome attitudes and structures that kept millions enslaved in poverty" and in conditions contrary to the dignity of human persons, the Pope was seen as establishing the basis for an effort to bring about a fruitful collaboration between peoples of different faiths.

Huge crowds of not only Catholics but also peoples of other faiths warmly welcomed him and thronged to see, hear and meet him wherever he went. The press (even more than the television) kept a constant record of the Papal visits and sayings, the South Indian press with abundant photographs. The reporting was at times glowingly warm (*The Statesman*), mostly objective and positive. They showed the head priest of the famous Kali temple at Kalighat, Calcutta, garlanding him, and approved the way the Hindus of Kerala graciously allowed his podium to be built on a spot sacred to them, the Arutha Ghat. And all this, despite attempts by some Hindu groups to disrupt the nation's response to his visit through protest processions, or the burning of his effigy.

Thus the pope's visit to India was seen by the English language newspapers of India as not merely a historical event that "refreshed"

India's ties with the Vatican, but as a spiritual one which proved the fears on the part of some that he would convert Indians to Catholicism totally unfounded. Rather, he "made people feel they really mattered", and "may have led to people becoming better human beings."

Desiderio PINTO, S.J.

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### III. THE EUROPEAN PRESS

The reactions of the foreign press were clearly in function of the preoccupations and prejudices of their readers. The questions which the journalists put to the Pope on his way back to Rome, which echoed the questions they had put in a pre-visit press conference in Delhi, showed the spirit of their reporting. "Why did the Pope speak of birth control (quoting Gandhi) in a over-populated country like India?" "The problem, replies the Pope, is found everywhere. It is a question of the means adopted (to face it). We had to indicate an ideal, and in this matter Gandhi is more Christian than so many who proclaim themselves Christians" (*Il Messagero*). But *Le Monde* considers the Bombay speech totally incongruous "in a country that grows by one Australia every year." *Catalunya Cristiana* reflects on the ecumenical implications of basing the teaching on the thought of Gandhiji.

A second critique was that the Pope did not speak sufficiently (except in Ranchi) against the caste system that affects India and even the Indian Church so much. The Pope answered this comment in the plane press conference: "I went to India to visit the Indian Church, not to criticise the people or the tradition of India for their social faults. I think that many steps forward have been made in this question, in the time of Gandhi and later by the Indian Government. Besides, there are systems in the world that also have their own castes, even if they do not use the word" (*Il Messagero*, *Il Tempo*). *Le Monde* considers that in spite of all, this silence betrays the weakness of the social message of the Pope in India. For the Pope, the model of social involvement is clearly Mother Teresa. She and Gandhi were declared to be his "constant companions" in the journey. His treat-

ment of her shows how he sees in her the model of what the Church can do at present to influence the Indian society. By contrast, the way of conscientization and conflict was not mentioned. *Le Monde* speaks of his silence about the fisherfolk struggle in Kerala, although a paragraph to denounce social injustice in general was "glued" on to the speech at the last minute.

Another weakness, according to the same French paper, was "the superorganization of the journey by the Indian Church" which isolated the Holy Father from the great poverty of the country. This did not prevent him from saying, according to the European journals, that what impressed him most in the journey was the poverty of the people and the fact that in Bombay one-third of the population lives practically without a home. And yet, unlike the journalists', the Pope's gaze does not stop at this. He also saw "a people with a great culture, a great spirituality, a spirituality incarnated, so to speak, in their behaviour. . . ." This is why he can hope that the Government, with its democratic principles, will be able to overcome the problem of poverty. In this connection it is also worth noting that the Pope acknowledged in Bandra that "the Church does not have simple and ready-made solutions to all the problems that beset humanity" (*Le Monde*).

The point which most journalists consider the most striking feature of the visit is the question of the inter-religious dialogue. Spain's *El Pais* presents to its readers a Pope in India who has become "one more religious leader among many religious minorities", "the head of one of the many sects in the ocean of deep spirituality" that is India, and presents this as a point for Catholics to reflect upon. It affirms that the Pope would have said to the journalists (on his way to India?) that he was coming to India "to get the Catholic Church in that country to open itself to dialogue with the great religions." (We did not find this saying mentioned elsewhere.) *El Pais* also highlights the meeting of the Pope with the Dalai Lama, with Dr Runcie, with the Kalighat Temple priest, with Swaminathan in Madras. Similarly, *Le Monde* ends its overall assessment of the visit by saying that "the great new element" in this journey was the repeated call to inter-religious dialogue.

Some other flashes that have struck the European press have been: the Delhi visitors at the Rajghat, polite but cold, while looking at the Pope on his knees at the Gandhi *samadhi*; the vitality of the

tribal churches; the living saint that is Mother Teresa; the Pope in Madras wearing a "Sikh shawl" (*sic!* in *El Pais*, it was "Muslim"! ) and the great crowds, especially in Madras, listening the Pope's call to "evangelize" and in Kerala devotedly waiting to see "the great saint from the West" or contemplating him draped in rose colours, concelebrating the Syro-Malabar liturgy at the beatification of a son and a daughter of the soil. A photo of a girl applying the desacralised "Shiva Sign" on the forehead of the Pope was published in several newspapers (*La Croix*, *Catalunya Cristiana*).

In passing, the French newspaper makes a critique of the Indian Church: undisputably well immersed in the social dough of the country, its education is, however, geared mostly to the middle classes: the bishops of the North exercise disproportionate influence; outside Kerala the faithful of the Oriental rites are treated "like poor relatives"; the permanence of the caste system in the Church; the anguished search for equality and dignity expressed in the words of Mar Gregorios on behalf of the Syro-Malankara Church.

In conclusion, the reporting of the press we have seen was positive on the whole, even if biased in its prejudices. *Le Monde* concludes its assessment of the journey with the affirmation from the Hindu leader Dr G. Ramachandran, that "nobody after Gandhi had purified our souls and raised our lives" as John Paul II did in this journey. Nobody after the Mahatma, says the reporter J.P. Clerc, had drawn such huge crowds on the streets and roads of India.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

# Documents

## SPEECH OF THE HOLY FATHER, POPE JOHN PAUL II, AT THE RAJ GHAT, DELHI

1st February, 1986

### Outline

The teachings of Mahatma Gandhi regarding the primacy of the spirit and the power of truth constitute a valid and fruitful response to the needs of the contemporary world.

1. The figure and meaning of the life of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation and "apostle of non-violence":
  - The light is still shining; his heritage speaks to us still;
  - Homage to this hero of humanity.
2. Peace and justice will only be achieved through the supremacy of the spirit and through *Satyagraha*, the "truth-force":
  - The dignity, equality and fraternal solidarity of all human beings;
  - The rejection of discrimination;
  - Mutual collaboration between religious groups.
3. The solution of the problems of the contemporary world lies within the capabilities of humanity: "from a new heart, peace is born":
  - Peace is fragile and injustice abounds;
  - Yet the construction of a better world is possible.
4. Proclamation of the *Beatitudes*, in which Gandhi found the confirmation of his own thoughts:
  - Inspiration in the search for justice;
  - "Conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by suffering".

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Dear Friends,

1. My visit to India is a *pilgrimage of good will and peace*, and the fulfilment of a desire to experience personally the very soul of your country.

It is entirely fitting that this pilgrimage should begin here, at Raj Ghat, dedicated to the memory of the illustrious Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation and "apostle of non-violence".

The figure of Mahatma Gandhi and the meaning of his life's work have penetrated the consciousness of humanity. In his famous



words, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has expressed the conviction of the whole world: "*The light that shone in this country was no ordinary light.*"<sup>1</sup>

Two days ago marked the thirty-eighth anniversary of his death. He who lived by non-violence appeared to be defeated by violence. For a brief moment *the light seemed to have gone out*. Yet his teachings and the example of his life live on in the minds and hearts of millions of men and women. And so it was said: "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere and I do not quite know what to tell you and how to say it. . . . The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Yes, the light is still shining, and the heritage of Mahatma Gandhi speaks to us still. And today as a pilgrim of peace I have come here to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi, *hero of humanity*.

2. *From this place*, which is forever bound to the memory of this extraordinary man, I wish to express to the people of India and of the world my profound conviction that the peace and justice of which contemporary society has such great need will only be achieved along the path which was at the core of his teaching: the supremacy of the spirit and *Satyagraha*, the "truth-force", which conquers without violence by the dynamism intrinsic to just action.<sup>3</sup>

The power of truth leads us to recognize with Mahatma Gandhi *the dignity, equality and fraternal solidarity of all human beings*, and it prompts us to *reject every form of discrimination*. It shows us once again the need for mutual understanding, acceptance and collaboration between religious groups in the pluralist society of modern India and throughout the world.

3. The traditional problems of poverty, hunger and disease have not yet been eradicated from our world. Indeed, in some ways they are more virulent than ever. In addition, new sources of tension and anxiety have emerged as well. The existence of immense arsenals of weapons of mass-destruction causes a grave and justified uneasiness in our minds. The inequality of development favours some and plunges others into inextricable dependence. In these conditions *peace is fragile and injustice abounds*.

*From this place*, which belongs in a sense to the history of the entire human family, I wish, however, to reaffirm the conviction that with the help of God the construction of a better world, in peace and justice, lies within the reach of human beings.

But the leaders of peoples, and all men and women of good will,

1. *Homage to Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi, 1948, pp. 9-10.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Letter to Youth*, note 41.

must believe and act on the belief that the solution lies within the human heart: "from a new heart, peace is born."<sup>4</sup> Mahatma Gandhi reveals to us his own heart as he repeats today to those who listen: "The law of love governs the world. . . . Truth triumphs over untruth. Love conquers hate . . ."<sup>5</sup>

4. *In this place*, as we meditate on the figure of this man so marked by his noble devotion to God and his respect for every living being, I wish also to recall those words of Jesus recorded in the Christian Scriptures—with which the Mahatma was very familiar and in which he found the confirmation of the deep thoughts of his heart:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3-10).

May these words, and other expressions in the sacred books of the great religious traditions present on the fruitful soil of India, be a source of inspiration to all peoples. and to their leaders, in the search for justice among people and peace between all the nations of the world.

Mahatma Gandhi taught that if all men and women, whatever the difference between them, *cling to the truth*; with *respect for the unique dignity of every human being*, a new world order—a civilization of love—can be achieved. And today we hear him still pleading with the world: "Conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by suffering."<sup>6</sup>

May God guide us and bless us as we strive to *walk together*, hand in hand, and build together a world of peace!

4. Cf. *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 1984.

5. *Young India*, 23 October 1924.

6. *Selections from Gandhi*, ed. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1948, p. 186.

## **Towards an Indian Theology of Liberation**

STATEMENT OF THE INDIAN THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
9th Annual Meeting, Poonamallee, Madras, December 28-31, 1985

### *Introduction*

1. This is a statement of the Indian Theological Association at its 9th annual gathering at the Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, Madras from December 28-31, 1985. Out of one hundred and forty members more than seventy were present. Most of the participants were priest theologians. We regret very few women and only a few lay people were present. We are addressing this statement to you, our friends in India and the world over, engaged in the struggle for the poor and the oppressed with whom we share their concerns, and to all those who believe in the Divine as an ally of life and freedom. Our search and exchange these days have centered around the theme, "Indian Theology of Liberation". We have struggled together for authenticity and clarity. We prayed and shared the Eucharist in common and in groups. We moved towards a deeper understanding of one another, of the oppressive situation in which millions of our people are forced to live, of the historical demands of our humanity and of our faith, as well as of our failures as Christian thinkers. We are grateful to God for the experience of these days, and thankful to one another. And we ask for the grace of fuller conversion to the poor, to the cause of their liberation, and to genuine human existence.

2. Liberation struggles and freedom movements have become intense and world-wide. They are the oppressed people's response to systems, principalities and powers which despoil, dehumanise and kill. They strike at structured domination; they seek to subvert established mechanisms of oppression, and set the downtrodden free. The struggles and movements are found to be living and functioning at various levels of reality. They range from a new socio-political consciousness kindled in the body of the poor; through hunger for justice burning, like the bush on Sinai, in the hearts of the young and the old alike, in our villages and slums; to the committed action of organized groups who dissent, resist, fight, and pay the price; and on to full-scale revolutions as have been carried out in China, for instance, or Cuba, or Zimbabwe. It is calculated that in India there are over 2500 activist groups of which a great number include in their ideology and programme people's organization and struggle for liberation.

3. Liberation struggles and freedom movements are not new. Nor is theological reflection on them without precedence. The exodus is a classical case in point. But it is in recent decades that various deeply oppressed sectors of humankind have started to read history and religion critically from their own predicament, to re-read them in their wounds and the death of their children, and to elaborate a

body of theological thought, reflections on their oppressed condition and on their faith by making the two interact critically and creatively. The result has been the emergence of theologies of liberation, each with a different experience of oppression as its focus. Thus the focus of Black Theology of Liberation in the U.S. is racist oppression; in Latin America it is economic and political oppression; in the Eastern European countries it is ideological and political oppression; among North Atlantic women the centre of concern is erotic or sexist oppression born of patriarchy, while Africa's preoccupation centres on cultural oppression. In Asia, articulate theologies of liberation have sprung from people's liberative praxis in South Korea and the Philippines.

4. The foci may differ. But the approach of nearly all the branches of Theology of Liberation on all the continents is identical though in each case it has been independent in its origins. All start from below; all start from an experience of oppression; all start from commitment to a new, non-oppressive, equal social order and from within involvement in liberational struggles. It is from there that they analyse social realities, re-read the Bible, re-express their faith, and re-conceive theology as a service to liberation combat and to the creation of a new earth.

5. These movements have made the name Theology of Liberation familiar in the theological world of modern times; not only familiar, but also challenging and controversial. We are thankful to the people whose thought and struggle have given us the name. But we know, as well as they, that no authentic theology can be an import or export commodity. Authentic theology must be conceived in relation to the oppressed and brought forth in the common political travail of each people, in each concrete historical context. What is our condition and context? What kind of oppression have we, Indian theologians, become aware of? How profound and complete is our analysis of it? What tools are we using to understand it? In what struggles are we participating? At what cost and risk to ourselves? And where lies our approach road?

### I. The Indian Situation

6. The foremost feature of the Indian situation is the staggering inequalities caused by the present pattern of development. This situation is well known and does not need any elaboration. It suffices to mention a few facts. We live in a country where caste and class coincide, assets and income are monopolised by a few persons from the upper castes and classes who hold economic, social, political and cultural power. The top ten percent own over seventy percent of the assets, while the share of the lowest twenty percent is less than two percent. The latter belong primarily to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. While the situation of the upper classes and castes improves and they control most political offices, financial institutions and high status jobs, the state of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and women from the weaker sections deteriorates. Children

are denied the right to proper growth. There are an estimated 45 million child labourers in India.

7. This division of society into the powerful and the powerless is given a religious legitimization in the name of the caste system. We find ourselves in a male-dominated society in which women are treated as property. Even while being shocked at atrocities on the scheduled castes and at dowry-deaths, very few make any attempt to get away from the caste and male domination attitudes that ultimately give rise to these atrocities. We saw these inequalities reflected in all areas such as literacy, infant mortality, malnutrition, bondage and lack of access to any facilities. These inequalities accumulate as one goes down the ladder of urban, rural, class, caste and sex differences with the rural scheduled caste women being the most exploited.

8. We are equally conscious of the struggle of many groups against this unjust system of inequalities and exploitation. We are aware of movements for upward mobility as, for example, among the Ezhavas. We also know of dalits awakening to the fact that they are deprived of their right even to basic necessities like their right to draw water from the village well. Many of them have started demanding their right to be human. We know about the tribals revolting against deforestation and destruction of the forests which are their life system. We are aware of women's movements, the struggles of fisherfolks, of the landless agricultural labourers, other unorganized sections and various forms of political awakening among the marginalized groups.

9. We are also aware of the resistance from the dominant sections to any change among the weaker sections. The people who struggle are suppressed in the name of national security. Laws such as the National Security Act (1984), Essential Services Maintenance Act (1984) and the Anti-Terrorist Act (1985) are used even to eliminate them physically. The dominant sections often give a communal turn to these struggles in order to get the support of the masses against the activists. Activists are called missionaries or atheists and efforts are made to turn the masses against them. This has to be viewed particularly in the context of fundamentalist revival among Hindus, Muslims and other religious groups and tension amidst various communities. The leaders instigate the masses against the activists in the name of religion and it is the common people who suffer the most during communal riots and other forms of victimisation that follow.

10. It is in this context that we reflected on our role as theologians. We are fully aware that theology in all faiths has, oftener than not, given religious legitimization to inequalities and oppression. In India it has been done in the name of *varna*, *dharma* and *karma*; and other religions have used different frameworks. But very rarely has theology identified the protest and prophetic elements in every religion in order to complement and support the liberative struggle going on in our society. In fact, theology has often deflected attempts at reform by finding new legitimization for inequalities.

11. Hence we feel encouraged by the beginning of an awakening among many Christians. It is heartening to see many Christian women and men, priests and religious join various other groups which are trying to change the system in favour of the poor. Many of them have thus become part of people's struggles. This motivates us to make an effort to theologise on this oppressive Indian situation and identify ways of supporting the marginalised sections that are demanding their right to be human.

## II. The Role of the Indian Church in the Liberative Movements

### (i) *The Ideal of an Ecclesial Community*

12. The Acts of the Apostles present the Church as a community that continues the prophetic mission of Jesus Christ (Acts 2: 17-18). This prophetic spirit was operative first with the Church liberating it from the narrow socio-religious framework of the Jewish community and turned it into a powerful leaven of transformation of society in the world. The power of the Spirit that animated it, enabled it to challenge the existing value system, even though it was a minority. Its identity was that of a community, based on sharing, and active in service.

13. From the beginning the Apostles presented to the Christians the ideal of a community built on authentic human relationship as the only means of relating to the divine and building a Church working for the total liberation of human beings. Though the first Christians did not come up to this ideal, the Apostles continued to challenge them to live up to it. We too find ourselves facing the same challenge in the Indian situation today.

### (ii) *Existing Contradictions*

14. However, Church in India presents a picture of contradictions, as far as the liberation of the oppressed is concerned. From the very beginning the Church projected the image of an institutional religion, concerned about its own ideologies and interests, instead of being a leaven that transforms society. It never effectively questioned the sinful structures of Indian society, such as the discriminative caste system and unequal economic order. Rather, many sections of the Church took pride in allying themselves with the higher castes and the politically and economically powerful.

15. In the recent past a large number of people have become Christians in search of liberation from the caste system; however, they were not allowed to free themselves from caste oppressions, because the Church, in most parts of India, was, and is still, controlled by the upper class and upper caste elements that continue to treat them as new Christians and untouchables. Even within its own internal organization, it maintains these inhuman structures which divide the community into castes and social classes.

16. These contradictions continue even today. We find several Christians actively involved in the struggles of marginalized groups, such as the fisherfolk, tribals and women belonging to the weaker sections; but they receive very little support from the Christian community as a whole. By and large, the community seems to be conditioned by a service mentality.

17. Because of the pressure of the dominant sections within the Church, the survival mentality and the minority complex, the Church in India tends to become more and more institution-oriented. The power wielding sections which control the Church, also get the benefits of these institutions and develop a vested interest in their maintenance. This stifles the prophetic spirit within the Church, making the gifts of the Spirit become ineffective, and hampering the efforts of the marginalised sections to build a more just society.

18. This opposition of the dominant sections is further strengthened by the mentality of the hierarchy which tests authenticity more by conformity to an orthodox teaching than by readiness to get involved in the struggles of the poor, where the living Christ is present.

19. Guided by the traditional theology of mission the Church continues to view evangelisation with an stress on numerical increase and institutional growth. Consequently, its mission to transform the world in the prophetic spirit of Jesus seems to suffer (Lk 4:18).

20. This movement towards a new society essentially involves a readiness to live with a situation of ongoing conflict and pluralism. But the institutional and dogmatic mentality of Church leadership does not seem to tolerate pluralism, be it in its theology, way of living or worship. This diverts the attention of the Christian community from major issues of socio-economic inequality and polarises them around marginal issues. The creative energy of the community is drained away and Christians are prevented from making any significant contribution to social change.

21. The Church must liberate itself from the mentality, which negates experiences other than the Greco-Roman, and must establish complete equality of Rites, though in the end all imported Rites must give way to genuinely indigenous forms of ecclesial expressions.

### *(iii) Liberative Efforts in the Past and Present*

22. However, we do not mean that the Indian Church has never been involved in socio-economic or political issues. We Christians were not fully aware of the oppressive structures that dominated the socio-economic scene and often this involvement took the forms of relief and charitable works, viewed as an evangelical action. We really regret the Church's undue dependence on foreign money and call for a more conscientious use of funds raised from abroad and our own country.

23. We also see signs of uneasiness felt by the Church leader, about the unjust economic structures. They have made many state-

ments calling upon Christians to work for a new society; but unfortunately, on the plane of implementation, they have been ineffective, because they lacked courage to liberate themselves from dominant sections and vested interests.

24. The major constraint to implementation has been the Church's cultural alienation and undue subservience to external authority. Another very important reason as to why the Church leaders hesitated to support struggles for change, was their undue fear of Marxism, though as a matter of strategy, they have at times allied themselves with the Marxist parties. Due to this fear complex with regard to Marxism, the dominant sections, who advised the leaders and have vested interests in the maintenance of the status quo, presented people's struggles as Marxist and atheistic, thus ensuring the perpetuation of their own domination.

25. Also, the formation of the priests often becomes a tool of alienation rather than preparation for involvement in the struggles of the people. Their lifestyle and the type of theology they learn result in a value system, meant more for security than for risk-taking, which would be the mentality needed for those who should get involved in a struggle.

#### *(iv) Hope for the Future*

26. However, we are convinced that today, in spite of these obstacles, there is still vitality in the Indian Church. We hear many voices of protest, and we see many women and men getting involved in the life and struggle of the marginalised sections. This gives us hope and this hope can become a source of new life if the whole Christian community, including its leaders, listen to the prophetic cries. We feel, therefore, that we should support any move towards dialogue between the activists and various sections of the Christian community, no matter who takes the initiative in this direction.

27. We, as theologians, have an important role to play in understanding the signs of the times in a spirit of faith (GS 4) and to theologise, supporting these struggles. An authentic Indian liberation theology can emerge only when those who teach theology and those engaged in the training of future priests and religious participate in and support these struggles.

28. The creation of basic community action groups that are guided by the power of the Spirit in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed can promote the growth of such a theology. These communities should serve as catalysts in the society for social change, and in this process they should collaborate with men and women of other faiths. This will demand a genuine process of inculturation, which, in this context of liberation theology, is to be understood as revalorisation and acceptance in our lives of popular religiosity and the culture of tribals, scheduled castes and other oppressed sections of the people.



### III. Search for an Ideological Framework

29. In history, the liberation of the oppressed classes, castes, minority groups, has always been the outcome of a collective action. But collective action for liberation requires an ideology, that is, an explanation of oppressive mechanisms at work in society and a *liberation project* which includes clear goals and the means to attain them.

#### (i) Marxian Vision

30. Among the ideologies which have attempted to fulfil this function in the world today the most powerful one is perhaps Marxism. In the course of this century, and within a span of 60 years, more than one third of the earth's population has come under its sway: Russia and the whole of Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Kampuchia, Ethiopia and a few others countries.

31. Marxism as an ideology, not only shapes the actual destiny of hundreds of millions within those countries, but appeals to many more millions who hope in their turn to achieve their liberation.

Some of the reasons for this appeal of Marxism, chiefly in the underdeveloped countries, are: (i) it provides a scientific understanding of the mechanisms of oppression at the world, national and local levels; (ii) it offers a vision of a new world to be built up as a socialistic society, a first stage towards a classless society, where genuine brotherhood may become hopefully possible, and for which it is worth sacrificing everything.

32. Marx offers an explanation for this situation: exploitation of labour, alienation of native wealth by colonial powers, a political machinery controlled by the capitalists, the religious, cultural and social patterns favourable to the economically powerful groups. This analysis has contributed to the understanding of culture and religion.

33. Marxism offers a world view where man collectively and in history, appropriates his essence through labour and moves to greater self-fulfilment in relation of brotherhood with others. Because of this vision, a theologian must be open to it and ask himself whether the tools of social analysis as offered by Marx are or are not helpful to him.

34. In practice, Marxism has not stood up to the high vision it offers. There are many reasons for it. Some pertain to the corrosive pressure of world capitalism; other reasons are internal to the socialist societies themselves, and the means of liberation they used, such as resort to political purge, and the formation of new and oppressive bureaucratic classes.

35. We believe, however, that in the common task of liberation of the exploited, Marxists and Christians can help one another and cooperate in the process of becoming a more human and a more efficient instrument of liberation.

(ii) *Gandhian Vision*

36. As against the Marxian idea of class war, and the violence which would characterise class war, India's own freedom struggle offers an alternative, which we cannot overlook in our search for an ideological framework for liberation theology.

37. Though the integral liberation which Gandhi envisaged for India is not realized, the method of liberation which he evolved remains a potent and comprehensive but unexploited resource.

38. That method is a praxis, which first of all recognizes the fact of all being locked in a situation of structure of bondage and alienation, and the need for someone to be liberated in order that the rest may be liberated. Hence it does not isolate individual liberation from the social.

39. Secondly, making an analysis of the behavioural structure, which is at work in an alienated social context, it recognizes the active and passive roles respectively of the oppressors and the oppressed in the process.

40. Thirdly, it proposes a correspondingly proportionate strategy of non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience, with the penal consequence of voluntary suffering for breaking the bondage and oppression. The suffering confers, secures and proves the fitness of the passive resistance for freedom, and frees the oppressor as well, and reconciles them in a new human fellowship.

41. In order to preserve the freedom, justice and fellowship secured by such sacrificial suffering, that just and free society is conceived in terms of small social structural units of self-governing and self-supporting village and town units, without the need for big or centralized governing machinery, which itself is to function in a spirit of trusteeship.

42. In this way Gandhi brings the religio-spiritual heritage of India to the liberative task and at once merges it with the Christian model of Christ's suffering love which breaks the oppression of the sin of the world. Thereby he challenges Christianity to a rediscovery of the liberative potential of its own paradigm.

43. After Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave has taken trusteeship a step further through the concept and practice of *bhudan*. And Jayaprakash Narayan with his 'total liberation' has pointed to the validity of civil disobedience even in democratic political structures.

44. The Gandhian approach of behavioural analysis overlooks the fact that the behaviour pattern is conditioned largely by the socio-cultural and political structures. Building its system on an optimistic view of human nature, it relies more idealistically on the goodness of the individual than on a realistic understanding of the social system. His vision of equality within *varnadharma* again seems unrealizable in practice. Trusteeship likewise depends too much on the goodness of the individual.

45. While rejecting capitalism, we are not yet clear on the alternative for India. We need an Indian form of socialism which may have to borrow from Marxism, Gandhism and other Indian systems. The search for an Indian alternative has to continue.

#### IV. Towards an Indian Theology of Liberation

46. Liberation is understood as integral. It begins here and moves towards the New Age. It is liberation of the whole person and the entire social order from everything that oppresses and alienates. Person and society are not extrinsic to each other. They are interior each to the other, and they are together. Liberation, therefore, cannot be purely individualistic, spiritual or psychic; it will necessarily be social and political. Political includes, first, corporate action for different, equal relations of production and power; it includes, secondly, a critical awareness of structures and a new social consciousness which arise from action around issues and from confrontation with concrete experiences of oppression. It follows that mere almsgiving, alleviation of suffering and relief measures are not liberation. They may be necessary as emergency measures. Institutionalised, they become part of the system of oppression unless they are explicitly presented as a criticism of and protest against the system which produces wretchedness for the masses.

47. The ultimate basis of liberation theology is our Christian faith in the incarnational self-giving of the Divine in Jesus Christ as well as our responsible existence in an ongoing history. The faith enables us to understand history in terms of Divine involvement which transforms life in all its dimensions, social and economic, cultural and religious. This vision gives us courage to face the present and hope to work for a better future in collaboration with all people. In the religious traditions and liberative movements, we perceive the transforming work of the Divine. Liberation struggles are a part in this joint work. Theological reflection is possible only if the theologian is involved in the struggles of the people. Commitment to the poor is the first act which then calls for an analysis of the structures of oppression with the help of scientific tools offered by the human sciences. Together with the people he reflects theologically on this praxis. India's religious heritage, especially the Christian faith experience, guides this reflection process. In India's pluralistic context this reflection has to be carried out with people of different faiths and ideologies, and expressed in pluralistic and exploratory fashion. The expression will be subject to constant revision because of the eschatological character of the liberation process.

48. The liberative struggles of the people and the activities and the participatory experience of the theologian form a basic *locus theologicus* for an Indian theology of liberation. The traditions of our people with all their symbolic expressions in folklore, myths, festivals, celebrations, stories, rituals etc. with the key concepts like *dharma*, *mukti* and *lokasamgraha*, with the sacred scriptures of India as well as the life of great liberative personalities and movements will be made to interact with the situation and the struggle. The Indian theological reflection will thus try to discover their liberative and their oppressive potential. Thus a new hermeneutic for the interpretation of the Indian religious scriptures and symbols will evolve a holistic vision of reality, and an integral approach to liberation will be decisive in this approach.

49. Liberation theology makes a critical assessment of secular movements committed to the human cause in India and tries to discover in them a genuine response to the Divine. It is from the critical interaction of all these factors with the Bible that a new experience of Christ and God can be had, and a fresh liberating word about them spoken.

50. The integral liberation of the human person and human history is the prime concern of an emerging theology of liberation. The economic, social, political and religious concerns become essential dimensions of this theology. A heightened sensitivity to the aspirations and struggles of the Indian people to create and maintain a social order that befits the human person has to be integral to it. Such an authentic human social order envisages a sharing of the earth and its riches as equals, a profound respect for and recognition of the freedom and dignity of every man and every woman. Among their inalienable rights are reasonable and comfortable living conditions such as food, work and shelter, a life free from every form of violence and exploitation, health and medical care, education and other basic amenities of life. Within these perspectives we see the contribution that could be made by Marxist ideology critically assessed and complemented by some of the insights of Gandhism. However, this can come only as the result of praxis.

51. The basic dynamics of theological reflection will be hope for a better future. In this regard the Indian eschatological notions like Ramraj, Swaraj and Sarvodaya as well as the secular idea of a classless society, which give hope to our people, will be critically assimilated to this theological framework. A critical assimilation of the mystical traditions of India will give rise to a spirituality of liberation which integrates contemplative experience of the divine and transformative action in his history into one process.

### *Conclusion*

52. Here we wish to conclude. This is no great document. But it is our document. In sending it to you, friends, we are sending you a bit of ourselves. A bit which bears the mark of our limitations, confusions and fears, and hopefully of our love. We have not come by all the clarity we sought, nor the depth of consensus we had desired. We are still groping for the specificity, which surely is somewhere there, of our methodology. Not all of us are clear as the ideological framework required for effective struggle and a committed theology. Not many of us are immersed deep enough in the struggle of the masses. But we are determined to continue the walk together. We are agreed on the crucial import of theologies of liberation, of solidarity with the oppressed, and of commitment to their cause.

53. Commitment is fundamental. It names the place where the Divine as the Liberator of the oppressed may be met. As long as the oppressed exist, liberative praxis shall be the touchstone of the

Divine. The Bible condemns to death all the gods that side with or connive at injustice (Ps 82). Commitment to liberation provides the perspective necessary for re-interpreting history and re-directing its future. It creates the sensitivity capable of re-reading religions which often are ambiguous, which have been manipulated, which have enslaved as well as liberated, which therefore call for constant critical assessment. This we have discovered.

54. We have also discovered the "mystical depths" of action for the other: for the other's, the brother's and the sister's, dignity, freedom and rice. Such action and combat are under the grip of the Divine, and suffused with the Spirit who is life. Our theology will keep in abiding touch with these divine depths of ordinary daily life committed to the other, and will strive to disclose ever more fully the spirituality of the political.

55. The place where we are going is the New Earth, the New City which the Divine gathers in its arms beyond the strife and bloodshed of the market (Rev. 21—22). The place where we are going is the New Age, the Eschaton. Because the Eschaton is wholly new and radically different we refuse to settle down in the present; we refuse to absolutize the status quo or anything already achieved in society or in Church; we refuse to be satisfied with little and big reforms in what is. Because the Eschaton is radically different we cannot but commit ourselves to radically transformative praxis. It is thus we can open up history to the Parousia. It is thus we can live out our faith-hope in the return of the Slain Son of Man and the rising up of all the Crucified of history.

56. And now, friends, we must pause and be silent. Silence is integral to our theology. It is liberation from verbiage, from the pollution of noise and from the closed world of words. We await your response. In the mean time we nurse the hope that when we meet again we shall have grown beyond what we have said here, and shall be able to re-read this document with a smile and with compassion.

*(All reactions and correspondence to: The Secretary, Indian Theological Association, Dharmaram College, Bangalore, 560 029.)*

# Book Reviews

## Scripture

**Companion to the Bible.** Edited by Mariam WARD, New York, Alba House, 1985. Pp. xxi-419. \$ 14.95 (pG).

This is a very useful collection of 1 biblical articles reprinted from journals (except one unpublished article and a chapter from a book) from the period 1980-1984 (one from 1979). The authors assure the high quality of the collection. We have essays by E. and . Achtemeier, B.W. Anderson, R. Brown, J. Fischer, R.H. Fuller, Cyrus A. Gordon, P. King, J.L. McKenzie, J. Murphy O'Connor, G. O'Collins, C. Osiek, P. Perkins, D. Senior, D. Stanley, C. Stendahl, C. Stuhlmüller, B. Vawter and Archbishop J. Whealon. This list of authors and the recent nature of the articles recommends the book for those familiar with biblical studies and who wish to keep abreast of recent trends.

The editor has selected and arranged the articles around six pertinent areas: Current Trends; 2. Hermeneutical Perspectives; 3. Archaeology and the Bible; 4. The Bible and the Community of Faith; 5. O.T. Themes; 6. N.T. Trends; with a final article written for the volume on "The Future of Biblical Studies" by Perkins. The topics, authors and articles of each section are introduced by the editor in an informative way.

One major value of the volume is the fact that the reader is exposed to various aspects of and different approaches to interpretation of the biblical text. Some aspect of the hermeneutical process is illustrated in each article apart from the articles which explicitly deal with this area (e.g. by Brown, Stendahl, Fuller, McKenzie, Anderson, E. Achtemeier and Fuller). Questions to which women are sensitive are developed by Mowry and Osiek. There are good articles on translation (Mowry and Metzger) and valuable indications of the role of archaeology (King) and reflections on homiletics.

Among the essays Murphy's fine

study of Wisdom literature will enlighten, while Vawter's reflections on God in the OT and Stuhlmüller on the prophets and peace will provoke. Fischer's development of the theme of dissent from Rom 9-11 is interesting, and Whealon's understanding of Revelation as the Christian adoption and revision of a Jewish apocalypse throws light on this book.

What we miss in such a collection is at least one article on the whole area of the Bible and liberation thought, and an hermeneutical study of the dialogue between the world and the Bible. There is also little on rhetorical criticism and canonical interpretation. The collection is educative.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians.** By F.F. BRUCE. (The New International Commentary on the New Testament). Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1984. Pp. xxviii-442.

Some thirty years ago Prof. F.F. Bruce wrote his first commentary on Colossians. In the meantime he wrote commentaries on all the Pauline letters, except the Pastorals. After this he was able to revise his commentary on Colossians. "I hope I understand better what is involved in the interpretation of Colossians. The revision of my commentary on this epistle ought to show a more adequate appreciation of the place of Colossians in relation to the main emphases of Paul's teaching" (p. xi). The commentary on Colossians now published in the NICNT is a completely rewritten work. His commentaries on Philemon and Ephesians are entirely new. These works are spiritual in overtone according to the line taken in the series.

In the Preface the author points out how, when revising his commentary on Colossians, he became more and more convinced that Ephesians continues in the line of thought found in Colossians,

as the work of revision helped him to see better the implications of Christ's cosmic role, a view which brings Paul's teaching to its climax.

The commentary to each one of the three letters gives a good introduction to Paul's message. Without entering into scholarly discussions and details the author gives a good background both for the reading of the letters and for the commentary. The reader finds a clear exposition of the geographical and historical setting, the occasion of the writing of the letter and its message. Scholarly or technical discussions are avoided, though taken note of. The general trend is soundly, moderately conservative, without ignoring other views. The readership in view are pastors, seminarians and the general reader.

The author gives his own translation of the Greek text. A general explanation of the message is given in the commentary; further explanations (grammatical, textual or critical questions) are supplemented in footnotes or appendices. Fairly abundant bibliographical references enable the reader to go deeper still into the meaning of the text and its message. This is a commentary informative without being technical.

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

## Religions

**Gandhi and the Good Life.** By Suman KHANNA. New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1985. Pp. viii-180. Rs 100.

In the context of the recent visit of Pope John Paul II to our country and his reverent attitude towards Gandhiji expressed at the Raj Ghat *samadhi*, it is a pleasure to present a study of the spirituality of Gandhiji. This is the third book on Gandhiji reviewed in these pages within one year—a sign of the relevance many people still find in his teachings. Ms S. Khanna's book focuses on the ethical and religious ideals of the Mahatma, and brings out their inner cohesion and the consistency between Gandhiji's thought and life, and between Gandhiji and the Hindu tradition from which he principally derived his spiritual sustenance. However, the author shows also where Gandhiji brings something new into that tradition, drawing from the spiritual needs of the times.

The book quotes very abundantly from the *The Collected Works of Gandhi* and from other works and anthologies; but the quotations are commented upon by a philosophically trained mind and a spiritual devotee. The initial chapter, on Gandhiji's links with the past, gives a general account of the Hindu tradition and its main themes. Chapter two begins the serious philosophical search into Gandhiji's ethical thought by studying the concept of Truth in Gandhiji, and especially his *mahavakya*, "Truth is God," which is interpreted at length. Chapter three is a study of the means, *ahimsa*, and of Gandhiji's perception of the relation of ends and means. Chapter four deals at length with the important network of the *vratas* or vows which Gandhiji undertook, some derived from traditional Indian spirituality (*brahmacharya*, *asvada*, *asteya*, *aparigraha* and *abhaya*), others new contributions of the Mahatma to the Hindu tradition (anti-untouchability, bread labour, equality of all religions and *swadeshi*). The chapter ends with a perceptive analysis of the meaning and place of humility in this network of vows. The fifth chapter deals with the religion of Gandhiji as an integration of goal and ways. Gandhiji's perception of God and his teaching on faith and on prayer are shown as well inter-linked. The meaning of "self-realization", with the social dimension it acquires in the mind of Gandhiji, ends this substantial chapter. The Epilogue sums up the main themes of the study. The book ends with select bibliography and a useful index.

The picture that emerges is of religious thought that is strongly ethical and an ethical philosophy that is rooted in a religious *sādhana*: "Thus understood, the whole of morality may be regarded as one vast *vrata*; and its moorings, as we now turn to see, are in Gandhiji's view, prayer and faith, so that his Ethical Religion is quite different from the religion which Kant advocates from 'within the bounds of Reason alone'" (p. 95).

The author is clearly a "disciple" of Gandhiji and his admirer. There is no attempt in the book to critique the philosopher or politician in Gandhiji. It is an exposition of his teaching as a guru for today. The occasional references to Western philosophers, specially S. Kierkegaard and G. Marcel, are used to support the ideas of Gandhiji.

Perhaps the specific language (s?) of Gandhiji needs to be studied more carefully and according to its context: is his speech the language of philosophy? of poetry? of spirituality? of politics? Do we at times interpret philosophically what was perhaps a metaphorical statement? Precisely because it is written "from inside", with a spiritual perceptivity of the subject treated, the book is enriching. It is a contribution to modern spirituality in general, and spiritual directors will be happy to put it in the hands of novices and other spiritual seekers.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

**Buddhism Made Plain.** An Introduction for Christians and Jews. By Antony FERNANDO with Leonard SWIDLER. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Book*, 1985. Pp. xix-138. \$ 9.95. *Indore, Satyaprakashan Sanchar Kendra*, Indore. xii-153. Rs 32.

This excellent work on 'Interfaith understanding' is the third revised edition of *Buddhism and Christianity: Their Inner Affinity*, first published in 1981 by the Ecumenical Institute For Study and Dialogue (490/5 Havelock Road, Colombo, Sri Lanka). The book has been revised by its author Dr Antony Fernando (Professor and Chairperson department of classical and Christian Cultures of the Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka), with the active help and co-operation of Dr Leonard Swidler (Professor of Catholic Thought and Interreligions Dialogue at Temple University Philadelphia, U.S.A.). The contribution of the latter, in his own words, "has been to recast and expand the text so as to reach out to a broader readership: Jews, Westerners in general, Americans, women, and those concerned primarily with social justice" ("Towards Judeo-Christian-Buddhist Dialogue", p. xix).

The present reviewer is quite sure that not only the Jews, Christians and Westerners in general but also Buddhists and Easterners—irrespective of the fact that they happen to be women or men, Americans or Indians, interested in social justice or in individual perfection—shall be benefitted by going through this book. He is in perfect agreement with opinion of John B. Cobb Jr (of the School of Theology at Claremont) that "Westerners who have known Buddhism chiefly through Zen will find here something

quite different. Fernando presents Buddhism in its Theravada form as practical wisdom for personal liberation. As such it becomes accessible to Christians and Jews and indeed to all who seek to grow toward maturity" (Blurb). Again, the reviewer also agrees with the remark made by Pinchas Lapide (the Jewish theologian and New Testament scholar) that "the author has accepted a massive challenge and has overcome it—namely, to present an understandable, meaningful explanation of the heart of Buddhism and to compare it to the heart of Judeo-Christian tradition" (Blurb). He is all for a "heart to heart approach." When any human being, professing whatever sort of faith, comes near to that compassion which Jesus (Yeshua) hinted at in his parables of "the prodigal son" (121) and of "the women taken in adultery" (122) and the Buddha in his dealings with the megalomaniac Angulimala, all differences melt away. It is at this level that one may agree fully with Fernando (and Swidler) that "there is not the least doubt that, judged exteriorly, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity are very different from each other. The *What* of each of them is almost irreconcilably different. But deep beneath their *What* is a *Why* that to a great extent is identical. Anybody who digs deeply enough to discover the *Why* of the three religious traditions will come to the place where s/he will see the three traditions bound together by a strong *inner affinity*" (Epilogue p. 128). Yet one must add "this deep digging" is metaphorical, wherein the foundations are not reached through demolition but are revealed as sustaining each and every part of the building well fitted and supported by them. The *Why* has significance so long as there is a *What*, and vice versa. Having seen the *Why* we must come back to the *What*, and face our real situation in which we must not only agree to disagree in many respects but also learn to appreciate and respect the differences. It is then, and then only, that the "massive challenge" can be accepted and overcome fully. The type of work that Dr Fernando and his companion (Dr Swidler) have produced raises the hope that they will address themselves to the task of bringing out another companion volume wherein they show how from an "identical *Why*" we can reach—or have historically reached—"different *Whats*" in the case of these three great Religions.

If they so do, the reviewer is sure,



they shall first of all realize in the case of Buddhism that their confining themselves to *Theravada* only and not making even a mention of the equally important schools of Philosophy such as *Sarvastivada*, *Sūnyavāda* and *Vijñānavāda* was not justified. It is also not fair to treat all other versions and developments of the Buddhist Religion such as *Zen* and *Tantricism* as Vulgarizations. Secondly, they will understand that their work did not require the decrying of the genuineness of "Karma and Rebirth Buddhism" (pp. 44-45). Thirdly, that there was no need to follow the seemingly wrong view of one Jamshed K. Fazdar that "to the Buddha, the Hindu Religion, which by then had become steeped in self-interest, class prestige and ecclesiastical niceties, seemed completely hollow" (p. 105). Fourthly, it will dawn upon them that as Yeshua lived and died as a Jew and had been regarded a prophet "who came to fulfil and not to destroy" so also "the Buddha lived and died a Hindu and came to fulfil and not to destroy Hinduism." This view is held by a very well-known and competent scholar who devoted a considerable part of his life to the cause of Buddhist studies and is echoed by many among whom is the author of *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Prof. T.R. V. Murti.

Dptt. Buddhist Studies, K.K. MITTAL  
University of Delhi.

**Averroes' Doctrine of Immortality. A Matter of Controversy.** By Ovey N. MOHAMMED. (Editions SR 6). *Waterloo Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press*, 1984. Pp vi-199. Canadian \$ 8.95; U.S. \$ 10.50 (pb).

One of the greatest events in the history of Christian thought is the contact, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with a previously unknown scientific and philosophical literature, through translations from Greek and Arabic. "The cultural horizon of the medieval world was suddenly broadened, and the scholastics were exposed to the breadth of the philosophic genius of Aristotle" (p. 1). Since Aristotelianism proper had developed in the twelfth century in Spain, reaching its climax in the Islamic West with Averroes (i.e. Ibn Rushd, AD 1126-98), the Christian interest in Aristotle created a simultaneous interest in the philosophical writ-

ings of Arab Aristotelians, which had also been translated and circulated at the same time. In other words, Christian scholars were then exposed not only to the philosophy of Aristotle, but also to the commentaries of Averroes. In fact, by the middle of the thirteenth century there was a tendency for the doctrine of the Philosopher (Aristotle) to be identified with that of the Commentator (Averroes). "Thus, the name of a Muslim philosopher became bound up with the efforts of the medieval scholastics to establish a stable synthesis between the Christian faith and the Aristotelian science that so seductively appealed to human reason... Of all those positions of Aristotelianism intrinsically least easy to harmonize with Christianity, his doctrine of the soul was prominent" (p. 4). Many Christians thought that Averroes' teaching—and, therefore, supposedly Aristotle's—that there is one intellect for all men, "demanded a denial of the spirituality and immortality of the soul" (ibid).

Averroes does not at any point explicitly deny personal immortality. The question is therefore what precisely is Averroes' thought about the nature and immortality of the soul? For the Christians of the thirteenth century it was sufficient that the doctrine of Averroes appeared to be in conflict with the Christian faith. However well motivated in their aim of defending the integrity of the human personality, they failed to understand the teaching of Averroes on the human soul in the wider context of Quranic and Muslim anthropology. In other words, they did not appreciate Averroes' Muslim consciousness and thus had to fail in deciphering his doctrine of immortality.

In the present study the author, a Jesuit who is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Regis College in the Toronto School of Theology, clears the source of misunderstanding from which the Western interpretation of Averroes has traditionally suffered and shows "the reorientation that should be given to the historical interpretation of Averroes" (p. 24). To Averroes "must not be ascribed purposes which he did not pursue, or premises he did not assume" (p. 25).

The study of the anthropological background of the Averroistic controversies (ch. 1), of Averroes' teaching on reason and revelation (ch. 2), the immortality of the soul (ch. 3) and the nature

of man's beatitude (ch. 4) leads Ovey Mohammed to the following conclusions: When Averroes says that man is a besouled body rather than an embodied soul, "he is saying that man is not a substantial composite, half corporeal and half incorporeal, but a being who belongs wholly to the physical universe . . . This does not mean that for Averroes the soul is extinguished at death . . . What it affirms is that it is not man's body nor his soul that dies, but man himself. What it connotes is that if there is to be any discussion of immortality which remains faithful to revelation, such immortality must be attributed not to the soul but to the whole man, body and soul" (132). Recognizing that death means the end of body and soul, i.e. of what can be called human in the strict sense, "the future life cannot be centered on it, but only on God and His promise of the resurrection" (p. 133).

Fr Mohammed convincingly argues Averroes' monistic anthropology to be basically in accord with that of the Biblical Scriptures. Hence, as the medieval Christian theologians in their (mitigated) dualistic outlook did not do justice to the Biblical monistic anthropology, "by the same token, Averroes was bound to be misunderstood by the Middle Ages to the extent that by the Middle Ages Christianity had diverged from the original monistic anthropology of the Bible" (p. 134). The ascription to Averroes of a denial of the future life is, thus, "part of a broader phenomenon and is intelligible only in the context of that development: namely a shift from understanding the Christian hope as the resurrection of the dead without a belief in the natural immortality of the soul to that of the resurrection of the body linked to a belief in the natural immortality of the soul" (p. 135). Averroes was in fact defending the truth of revelation, that since it is only man who truly exists, his only hope of overcoming death is the resurrection of the dead. "Like the New Testament, Averroes affirms that the future life is not a survival over death. It is grounded entirely in God and not in the natural immortality of the soul" (p. 142).

The present study is marked by a clear structure, a convincing argument and, not least, by careful formulation. It not only represents an important contribution to the history of Christian religious thought but also advances our understanding of the character of

Averroes' religious thinking and of an important chapter in the history of the Western appreciation of Islamic thought.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

*Islamic Society and Culture. Essays in Honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad. Ed. Milton ISRAEL and N.K. WAGLE. Delhi, Manohar, 1983. Pp. x-382. Rs. 175.*

The present volume collects twenty contributions on various aspects of the Islamic civilization in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent from its origin to the present day. Colleagues and friends commemorate the memory of Professor Aziz Ahmad (1913-78), the distinguished historian of Muslim life and culture who hailed from Hyderabad (A.P.) and spent most of his academic life in the U.K. and Canada.

The subjects dealt with by the contributors are as varied as Aziz Ahmad's range of scholarly interests was: history, literature, language, culture and interrelations between communities. Outstanding themes of the volume are: Muslim women's reform during the 19th century; Sufism and music; Shia religious poetry; force and violence in medieval Indo-Muslim historical writing in India; Hindu perceptions of Islam and Muslims; Partition; inner-Muslim dispute in Lucknow. The volume contributes substantially to the ever-growing body of scholarly writing on Indo-Muslim life and culture.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

### Spirituality

*The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila. Translated by Kieran KAVANAUGH, O.C.D. and Otilio RODRIGUEZ, O.C.D. Washington, Institute of Carmelite Studies. Vol. 1, 1976, pp. vii-406 and Vol. 2, 1980, pp. 554. No price given.*

We reviewed Vol. 3 of this translation in November 1985. These two volumes follow the same format with substantial introductions to the actual works and the translation. The text used is the Valladolid autograph with sections from the Escorial text which preserves at times the liveliness of Teresa's unedited text and variations from the text revised

by Teresa, namely the Valladolid autograph (see Vol. I, pp. 26-28 on these mss). Until now the classic translation based on another edition of Teresa's writings was by E. Allison Peers. Kavanaugh comments upon the methods used, the reasons, and aim of the new translation (Vol. I, pp. 28-30).

Volume One contains: The Book of Her Life, Spiritual Testimonies and Soliloquies, with notes on each group of writings and a general index. Volume Two has: The Way of Perfection, Meditation on the Song of Songs, and The Interior Castle. The notes are all gathered with the index at the end of the volume.

Though we are unable to judge the accuracy of the translation, we highly recommend this new translation. The volumes are well produced, the clear and bold print makes reading easy and they are cheap paperbacks. The English is closer to modern usage than earlier translations. The introductions reflect the advance in studies on Teresa over the years, especially among Carmelite scholars.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Steadfastness of the Saints. A Journal of Peace and War in Central and North America.** By Daniel BERRIGAN, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1985. Pp. vi-133, \$ 7.95.

This book is a descriptive and reflective "diary" of the journey to El Salvador and Nicaragua by Dennis Leder S.J. and the author. This journey was the response of these two dedicated men to letters from fellow Central American Jesuits appealing to North Americans to prevent an escalation of violence and also to help towards finding a lasting solution to the wars in that region. These two travelled "to go, to learn from, to be with the suffering people."

The book is deeply inspiring and reflects Leder's description of Dan Berrigan as "adventurous in spirit and critical in mind, irreverent towards the powers yet filled with ultimate concern." Berrigan's prose has a deeply poetic character, his reflections a startling honesty, and his dedication to peace, justice and human dignity an inspiring character.

In both countries these men spent

much time with other Jesuits. They saw at close quarters the ravages of violence, war and injustice together with the courage, dedication and hope of ordinary men and women usually inspired by their faith. They witnessed the commitment and ambiguity of the Church, the faith-based commitment to justice, and also the questionable and indefensible advocacy of violence or compromise caused by ideological stances.

The reflection on the Nicaraguan situation I found more balanced. It has a critique of Berrigan's friend Ernesto Cardenal and of the advocacy of violence by priests and others. The description of the El Salvadorian situation emphasizes principally the suffering of innocent people, the violence of the right wing military groups and the inadequacy of the actions, policies and attitudes of the Government of Duarte. Here the author could also have critiqued the guerilla groups. Romero stands out as a great Christian. From what a reliable eyewitness told me, I think that the description and evaluation of the Pope's visit to the tomb of the Archbishop is inaccurate.

The book is written for North Americans. The policies and actions of the USA are strongly criticized by a man who has consistently challenged the military involvement of the USA in other nations—the American violence.

This is the story of the men and women of these nations struggling for justice and freedom. Such a story is a challenge and an education to all who seek the integration between the service of faith and the promotion of justice. Berrigan is a deeply Christian man who is able to face the reality of evil and great human tragedy and remain full of hope. He describes how difficult it is to face the real challenges of commitment to Jesus Christ in terms of justice and to recognise and acknowledge the modern martyrs who die for justice. This is a book which expands our understanding of the Christian faith commitment.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**The Other Eucharist.** By Cedric REBELLO S.J. Bangalore, ATC 1985. Pp. ix-73. Rs 20.

The dedication of this book indicates its quality and value: "This book is dedicated to the Other Eucharist, Jesus

who lives in our midst in the crushed and broken bodies of the poor and the oppressed." After a series of concise descriptions of the deep rift between life and the eucharist, the author studies the intimate relationship between the sacrament and an authentic Christian life, especially in middle class communities. The book forces the reader to look at the world and the true reality celebrated in the eucharist along with its inherent challenges. The routine, social, pious and unreflective urban celebration is strongly criticized and contrasted with the social dimensions of a genuine Christian life, personal and communitarian, which grows out of and is nourished by the eucharist. A few questions at the end of each chapter indicate that the author wishes the book to be used for Christian formation.

Unfortunately, many who would be shocked, challenged and ultimately helped by this book will prefer soft spiritual reading to the realism demanded by it. Many readers will feel a healthy discomfort. The illustrations are simple and apt, and quotations from other writers enhance the rich content. The reader is also led to see the meaning and challenge of much of Jesus' teaching as the author quotes liberally from the Gospels. This is a very good addition to a parish or high school library. Priests and religious will not regret reading the book.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

C.S. Lewis. *The Man and His Achievement*. By John PETERS. Exeter, The Paternoster Press, 1985. Pp. 143. £ 4.95.

I review this study of Lewis as one who has read none of his major works and knows little more about him than his fame. The book helped to make a train journey a pleasure and I hope a memory.

Over 2 million copies of Lewis' books sell each year, 23 years after his death of which little was written as Kennedy was shot on that same 22 November 1963. Why do people still read this man?

The biography is interwoven with a study of Lewis' writings. His pilgrimage back to his Christian faith and his allegory *Pilgrims Regress* are studied together. In the light of his deeply Christian commitment, Peters describes, dis-

cusses and analyses Lewis, the Imaginative Apologist. A large part of this chapter considers *Mere Christianity*. Other famous apologetic works are both situated in the period of the World War and post-war Britain and assessed as apologetic writings, including the children books, the Narnia books.

The trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Voyage to Venus* (1943) and *That Hideous Strength* (1945) forms the basic content and context for the study of Lewis as a science fiction writer. Though *The Screwtape Letters* has sold over a million copies many people may not be aware of the size of Lewis' correspondence. Comments upon the three published volumes of his letters allows us a glimpse of the man and his Christian service to others by means of his pen.

The final chapter is an appraisal. The author looks at Lewis the man, husband and friend, lecturer and scholar, within the context of his Oxford life, where he was not offered a Professorship until too late and his years at Cambridge in a Chair established specifically for him. He reflects on his marriage and grief at his wife's death, his relations to students, friends and Mrs Moore. This is a fine and honest portrait.

I would recommend this study to anyone who wishes to begin to read Lewis or already knows this writer. The concerns of Lewis are not the concerns of Christian Indian theologians, writers and thinkers. However, in Lewis we come face to face with a genuine Christian, a great thinker, a powerful, clear, logical and disciplined writer, who will challenge us in our efforts to be creative, authentically Christian and clear thinkers and writers. He dedicated his life to theologize in the vernacular for the ordinary Christian and others of his age. He will delight and disturb. He uncovers woolly and emotional thinking which compromises the search for truth.

I would have appreciated a more extended comment upon *Surprised by Joy* and the significance of "Joy" (*Sehnsucht*) in Lewis's life and writings as this was so central to his own spiritual experience. A number of printing errors have escaped the proof reader.

P.M. MEAGHER





# Vidyajyoti

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## In This Issue

As we enter into the thick of the summer heat in most of the country, VIDYAYOTI offers to its readers a series of articles relating largely to the social and political dimensions of the Christian call.

Fr George V. LOBO, the well-known moral theologian from Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, makes a theological assessment of an acute problem in the national scene, the question of communalism. He asks whether the Church adds to this divisive communal consciousness and what are the conditions for its playing, rather, a role of reconciliation and national integration. As the communal crisis has sharpened so clearly in recent months, there is a certain urgency in the reflection he initiates and we feel that the Church in India should continue it and find its practical applications at all levels.

Fr J. KOTTUKAPALLY, also a frequent writer in our pages, begins a study of the different attitudes towards Marxism found in the Roman magisterial documents of recent years. His study will show how much assessments of historical movements are conditioned by the historical circumstances of the period when the assessments are made. This may be helpful for the correct hermeneutics of many documents.

Much has been written in recent years about the Basic Christian Communities that have sprung up in various parts of the world. Fr J.P. PINTO has done much research in this area and points out in the article presented here that such basic communities are the right locus for an authentic inculturation of the faith. We would like to relate this article to the one VIDYAJYOTI published in December 1985 on action groups in India.

# The Church and Communalism in India

George V. LOBO, S.J.

SINCE Vatican II, there has been a shift from the image of the Church as an "ark" out of which there is no salvation or a "fortress" defending itself or an "army camp" ready to fight for its expansion, to that of the "People of God" at the service of humanity. *Koinonia* leading to *diakonia* seems now to be the main note of the new self-understanding of the Church. This in some way fulfils the goal of transcending "triumphalism", "clericalism" and "legalism" as proposed by Mgr de Smedt, bishop of Bruges, during the first session of the Council.<sup>1</sup> Now the Church feels called upon to be open to the "signs of the times" and render service to the humanity at every level with a preferential option for the poor. Involvement in the struggle for a new and just society is being understood as a "constitutive dimension" of her faith and mission.<sup>2</sup>

While appreciating these developments, I would like to make some further reflections on the unique role of the Church in the context of communal strife in India which is one of the biggest social evils and the source of frequent bloody clashes. Let me start with a few experiences and observations.

## *Communal Dimension of Religion*

Recently, at the end of an all-India seminar, some good-willed people organized the recitation of prayers by small children of different faiths. The Hindu child was dressed as a Maharashtrian, the Muslim as an Arab, the Sikh as a Punjabi and the Christian with an European bridal dress. The language was Sanskrit, Arabic, Punjabi and English respectively. The cultural identification of different religions was quite marked. Such things are so taken for granted that scarcely anyone, as far as I could notice, saw any problem in it. People do not reflect that once religion and culture get

1. See ANTOINE WENGER, *Vatican II, Première Session*, Paris, Centurion, 1963, p. 153.

2. Cf SYNOD OF BISHOPS, 1971, *Justice in the World*, 6.

identified, communalism naturally develops and leads to confrontation at the slightest provocation. When socio-economic issues are involved, political interests intervene and foreign elements interfere, there can be violent strife, even leading to the division of the country, as it already happened at the time of partition in 1947. Such a danger is far from remote, as we are now witnessing the threat of Khalistan.

Some years back, a few Christians in Tamilnadu, together with many Hindus embraced Islam.<sup>3</sup> Whether this was due to such factors as Gulf money or to genuine change of heart is not the main point at issue here, although the relative freedom from caste among the Muslims seems to have been the main motivation.<sup>4</sup> It was reported that a certain Mary adopted the name of Miriam and a Solomon became Suleiman. The poor people did not know that Mary and Solomon of the Bible were in fact Miriam and Sulciman! Our Mary and Solomon thought that they had to adopt new names and a new way of dressing and of praying in a new language. Indeed, until recently most Catholics thought that the liturgy had to be in Latin just as the mantras of the Hindus were in Sanskrit and the Namaz of Muslims in Arabic. Is this because the respective deities did not understand any other language? Catholics have largely outgrown this stage after Vatican II. But the nostalgia for Latin, Gregorian chant and the like is still there in some quarters, while in others a new Christian identity is sought through the dominant American culture.

Incidentally, the opposition to conversion to Christianity among many Hindus, notably the RSS, is to a large extent due to the fear of cultural alienation of the converts, the development of a new socio-political awareness, leading to secessionist tendencies. From the nationalist Hindu standpoint, the fear is quite understandable and events in the North East have given at least some cause for it. Of course, such Hindus do not see that they have over-identified Indian nationalism with their own brand of religious culture. Has everyone in India to subscribe to the caste system or the worship of the cow? The anxiety would be more defensible if it was based on secular nationalism eager to preserve the unity and integrity of Bharat.

3. For this less known fact, see Andrew WINGATE, "A Study of Conversion from Christianity to Islam in Two Tamil Villages", *Religion and Society*, 28 (1981), no. 4, pp. 3-36.

4. See Mumtaz Ali KHAN, "A Brief Study on Mass Conversions of Meenakshipuram: A Sociological Enquiry", *ibid.*, pp. 37-50.



*What Is Religion?*

Pope John Paul, in his address to religious and cultural leaders in New Delhi said: "Religion directs to God all that is human within us."<sup>5</sup> Religion is the deepest dimension in man that ennobles all that is human and leading to transcendence.

However, phenomenologically, a religion could be described as (a) a belief system, (b) a set of rituals, (c) a pattern of life. Most religions start off with an inspiration or God-experience of the founder, but this gradually crystallizes into a complex of beliefs, rituals and mores. Some stress doctrinal purity while others ritual exactitude or fidelity to a code of conduct. Although all the existing religions have in fact greatly evolved through the course of history, there is often an uncritical claim to orthodoxy as if there had been a constant adherence to the same fixed tradition, so that any attempt at renewal or reform provokes a defensive reaction.

As any religious group needs some sort of identity for survival, there is a tendency on the part of the guardians of tradition to adhere to rigid positions and to attribute to the founder or ancient seers all that has been evolved during later stages.

Religion has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. On the vertical plane, the belief system is ultimately referred to a divine revelation or a message which the seers have received from the divinity. Every genuine religion is based on some sort of divine intervention in human history that provides a meaning to human life. Still, it must be recognized that the Scriptures in which this revelation is embodied are the "Word of God in the words of men." The Word of God cannot but be received and expressed according to the thought patterns of a particular time and place, not to speak of the views of the particular seer or sacred writer.

Further, this has been transmitted during the course of centuries often through other modes of thought. For instance, the Christian message has come down to us largely through the Greco-Roman thought patterns. Hence, to say that every detail of the Christian tradition is the revelation of God would not allow that revelation to be expressed in other thought patterns in other times and places. The question of inculturation then is not a secondary matter, but it touches the expression of the message of religion as such.

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5. *Osservatore Romano* (English Edition), 10 February, 1986, p.5.

As each religion or religious trend expresses a particular vision of God, man and the universe, the response of man is also characterized by this perception. There is a transcendent element in man's response expressed in a particular cult. Thus worship in Islam and Hinduism will have some fundamental differences. Even within Hinduism, rituals will have a different significance for the *advaitin* and the *bhakta*.

However, even though the essential elements of worship may be traced back to the original inspiration, rituals have greatly evolved during the course of time. Hence when a religion encounters other cultures there must be a scope for new expressions, if there is not to be a sort of religio-cultural colonialism instead of genuine expressions of divine faith. The mode of worship, even when it maintains a certain continuity with its original core, will have to evolve according to the particular culture of new peoples or the developments in the culture of the same people.

Likewise, as faith and life cannot be separated, divine revelation in a particular religion has a relevance to daily life. Thus the covenant morality expressed in the decalogue and the "fulfilment of the law" in the law of love according to Jesus, with the stress on unconditional love even of enemies (cf. Mt 5:43-48), should determine the conduct of his followers in any situation. But the concrete implications of this basic value cannot be fixed once for all in a rigid code of conduct. Even such an important norm as "Thou shalt not kill" lends itself to varying interpretations. While traditionalists too easily permit homicide for capital offences, liberals tend to allow abortion in certain situations.

### *Religion and Law*

The question of a "uniform civil code" regarding such matters as marriage and divorce has raised a veritable hornet's nest in India today. Hindus are by and large reconciled to the civil legislation of the Hindu Marriage Act and Special Marriage Act that have been framed with the modern personalistic view of marriage in mind, although provisions like the minimum age of marriage are often violated in practice.

While liberal Muslims want the rights of divorced women to be reviewed in the light of human rights, the more traditionally minded do not want any change in the *Shariat* or the accepted codification of

Islamic law. There is a large body of Muslims in between who are open to a change in the name of authentic Islam itself but are very suspicious of a Hindu majority State, albeit in the name of secularism, interfering in their laws and customs. Politicians and agitators, not without inspiration from across the border, aggravate the problem by rousing communal passions.

There are grave issues in questions such as whether all the details of the *Shariat* come from the Prophet or even are in harmony with the basic inspiration of the *Qu'ran*. It should be noted that there are different interpretations of the *Shariat* according to different traditions. Muslim law is not only embodied in the *Qu'ran*, but also contained in the *Sunna* or sacred customs that are documented in the *Hadith* coming down from the first companions of the Prophet. Later, with the cultivation of jurisprudence by the *Ulema*, divergent schools of law arose, although generally with a certain spirit of accommodation.<sup>6</sup> Hence those who wish to defend the *Shariat* must take into account this situation.

But there is a more basic question here. It is whether the legal norms found in any religious community are absolute or open to change. Christians, in the atmosphere of renewal, more easily admit nowadays that whatever is clearly not of divine law imprinted in the heart of man or whatever cannot be clearly seen to be the absolute will of Christ can be changed. Accordingly, many hallowed traditions among Catholics have been modified in the new Code of Canon Law. Although some find the changes too sweeping, it is significant that most people are gracefully admitting modifications of time-honoured customs and traditions. Indeed, according to the Christian stand, there is no positive enactment of Church authority which is not open to change.

Muslims, not having a clear distinction between the divine law and human traditions find it more difficult to change any traditional practice or law. Traditionalists of any religion would do well to admit that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27). Law is not an end in itself; it is meant to safeguard and promote human values.

Of late, Hindus have been less resistant to change, at least on principle. Still, Hindu society has managed to preserve to a great

6. See Ignaz GOLDZIEHER, *Introduction to Islamic Theology*, Princeton University Press, pp. 31-36.

extent the rigidity and oppressive nature of the caste system. It seems to have an inherent element of conformism leading to fatalism and passive acceptance of life. The Brahminical trend of Hinduism has always sought to impose its norms on the *Dalit* strata of the population.

Christian Scholastic thought had provided a framework for the evolution of social norms even while safeguarding basic human values. The "natural law" theory in its best expression was aimed precisely at this. But there has been a tension between the original Stoic idea of a fixed nature, almost like the physical nature of the universe, and a more personalistic view of nature.<sup>7</sup> The former overemphasis on the first aspect has led now to a large-scale rejection of the natural law morality. However, it is being revived under another form, namely, humanism, with its preoccupation with human dignity and human rights. Some such vision is necessary if human values have to be defended from the excesses of religious obscurantism or fanaticism and if there is to be a genuine dialogue between people of different faiths.

### *Religion and Society*

It is generally accepted that religion makes a significant contribution to the well-being of society. It is at the same time clear that religion, because of rigidity, narrow-mindedness and fanaticism, may also block the progress of human society. But this is not due to the essence of religion, but to the aberrations in the way it is practised. The saying of Marx, "Religion is the opium of the people", may have had a certain amount of basis in the way religion was practised at that time but cannot be generalized.

Here we would like to discuss how far it is desirable for a particular religion to organize itself into a distinctive social or even socio-political entity and how far a religious community relates itself to other communities, today especially to the national community.

Historically, votaries of all religions have tended to form themselves into distinctive communities. At a time when society was closed in on itself and when the movement of the population was restricted because of limited means of transportation, it was natural to find each particular region or sub-region having its own religion. Any development of new ideas or any departure from existing beliefs or

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7. See my book, *Christian Living According to Vatican II*, Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1982, pp. 182ff.

modes of behaviour was perceived as a threat and was dealt with through excommunication or other such sanctions. This was particularly true in a monarchical system of government wherein the king was the protector of the religion of his people and at times had even priestly functions. Anyway, he was always the guardian of law and morality in his dominion

In such a situation, there was always a dominant or official religion, and if any outsiders did maintain their own religion, they suffered from varying degrees of discrimination. If ever there was a major religious upheaval leading to division of the realm, the principle was *cujus regio, ejus religio* ("whose dominion, his religion"), as it happened during the Reformation in Central Europe.

Such unity between religious and political society seems to have been stricter in "monotheistic" religions. For the strict monotheist, there is one God, one set of religious beliefs, one way of worship and one code of behaviour, as is true to a large extent in the Israelite and Islamic communities. As Raymond Pannikar has pointed out, rigid monotheism contains within itself a tendency to monism at all levels.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand "polytheistic" beliefs may contribute to the fragmentation of society. The Christian Trinitarian doctrine rightly understood can have a wholesome effect on human society.

The close identification of religion, culture and political society is known as "theocracy". There are apparent advantages in the system as we see in the theocratic society of "Christendom" in Medieval Europe. There is greater stability and harmony in the population. The belief system is better safeguarded and its influence felt in all spheres of life. But theocracy tends to smother genuine development and thereby goes against the human values of life, freedom and conscience. The Inquisition and burning of heretics are some of its more bitter fruits. The human rights, including that of the religious freedom of migrants are easily violated. When there were few outsiders, this problem may not have seemed too serious. But in today's world, theocracy or "established" religion can scarcely be maintained without massive violation of these rights. So even the Holy See has recently agreed to the discontinuance of Catholicism as the "official" religion of Italy.

However, theocratic tendencies are still prevalent in the world.

8. "Non-dualistic Relation between Religion and Politics", *Religion and Society*, 25 (1978), no. 3, p. 52.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, himself not so devout a Muslim, declared that Muslims in India were a different "nation". He built upon the existing notion that Muslims formed a distinctive *Quom* (religio-cultural entity) and hardened the position to their being a "nation" in the modern sense. He deliberately evaded the question of the origin of the overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims and downplayed the factors that bound them to their neighbours belonging to other religions. Bengalis and Punjabis especially were made to split on religious lines and India was divided in a bloody manner so that ultimately there arose three nations—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—mutually antagonistic to each other. Since in residual India, 12% are Muslims and there are sizable areas where they are in a majority, the ill effects of Jinnah's "two-nation theory" are still working themselves out.

Sikhism which arose as a reform movement among Punjabi Hindus and which functioned as a bridge between Hindus and Muslims in North-Western India is now asserting itself as a Khalistan. While some would be satisfied with the religio-cultural concept of *Quom*, the more extremist protagonists of Khalistan are talking in terms of a separate nation state.

The situation in the North Eastern region has its own peculiarities. It is clear that the people in many of the states there are mostly Mongoloid and are different from the rest of the country, racially and culturally. Hence, naturally they would have separatist tendencies. But what is pertinent to our subject is the introduction of the religious factor. As several tribes have largely embraced Christianity, the separatist movements have a religious colouring. It has become a fashion to speak about Nagaland as a "Christian State." People who use such terms do not realize their explosive potential. If Nagaland is a Christian State, it would follow that Assam or Karnataka are Hindu States. If Christianity were to have a privileged position in Nagaland, Hinduism would logically have to have a similar position in Assam or Karnataka. Where then would be the relevance of "secularism" in India? Each state would have to organize itself in a theocratic style with the consequent discrimination against the minorities. On the national level, the Hindu majority could claim that India is a Hindu state and so in principle no different from the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In the modern situation, "secularism" in the civil sphere would seem to be not one option among many but the only way of preserv-

ing religious freedom and civil amity. *Religious pluralism is a fact of life* even in Western countries. In Britain, for example, not only are there now Christians of different denominations, but also sizable groups of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews and others. The "establishment" of the Anglican Church is increasingly seen as an anachronism.

It is true that "secularism" in the doctrinal sense means that human life and society should be regulated to the exclusion of all belief in the transcendent and after-life. This is not acceptable to any believer.<sup>9</sup> It is not in tune with the spirit of the Indian Constitution which gives every citizen the "freedom of conscience and the freedom to profess, practice and propagate his or her religion."

However, "secularism" in the civil or constitutional sense, does not mean such rejection or downgrading of religion. It is a recognition that people of every religion have equal civic rights. Such religious pluralism or neutrality means that the civil state cannot favour any particular religion. At the same time, it can and must respect religion as an important, if not the most important, human value.

Sane secularism also implies the "rightful autonomy of temporal affairs" which Vatican II affirms thus: "Created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually put to use, and regulated by men."<sup>10</sup> Although everything ultimately depends on God, individual sciences and arts have their own appropriate methods which must be respected. These do not depend upon any religious authority as such. If this is not understood, we have unfortunate episodes like that of Galileo.

The rightful distinction between the religious and civic fields ultimately works in favour of religion itself. This has been forcefully demonstrated by John Courtney Murray as regards the American experience.<sup>11</sup> If organized religion is allowed to interfere in the sphere proper to politics, it will not be long before politics invades the sphere of religion. Thus we get the politicisation of religion or the manipulation of religion for narrow political aims.

This is not said to defend in any way the privatization or over-spiritualization of religion. Religion, assuredly, has the role of inspiring every human activity, including culture and politics. We

9. Cf. Mushirul HAQQ, "Religion, Secularism and Secular State: The Muslim Case", *ibid.*, pp. 36-41.

10. *Gaudium et Spes*, 36.

11. See Raymond PANIKKAR, *art. cit.*, pp. 53-63.

need to avoid the extremes of "monism" and "heteronomy" and come to a non-dualistic understanding of the relation between religion and politics.<sup>12</sup>

It must be recognized that no religion has ready-made answers to concrete problems like the relative merits of the Western multi-party system of democracy and the one-party democracy or *Ujama* of Tanzania. In this connection, Vatican II declares: "Let the layman not imagine that his pastors are always such experts that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission."<sup>13</sup> The prohibition of clergy normally taking part in secular affairs like party politics is, to my mind, meant not to exclude them from being involved with real life issues like human rights, but to warn them not to misuse their religious authority or bring the religious affiliation into matters that are better resolved on a civil plane by working together with all people of good will. Mixing up politics and religion does good to neither. The past record of the clergy, mullahs and bhikkus is there to demonstrate this.

### *Roots of Communalism*

Communalism is the corruption of community, especially religious community. It is the mobilization and politicization of religious groups organized on the basis of powerful symbols to fight for narrow goals. As religion touches the deepest aspirations of man, the very ground of his existence and the transcendent goals of his life, it evokes the most powerful responses. When the religious emotion goes astray, it becomes a potent force of destruction. While religion has inspired the most heroic deeds, acts of unsurpassed generosity, the greatest refinements of art and the highest achievements of human endeavour in every sphere, it has also provoked the worst type of bigotry and fanaticism, violence and oppression. So it is very important to uncover the roots of communalism and strive to restore the true meaning of religion in human society.

(a) *Doctrinal roots.* It has been rightly said that every problem is ultimately a theological problem. A false view regarding the meaning of religion in human life can debase religion and cause untold harm to man.

12. See, *The Problem of Religious Freedom*, Westminster, Md., Newman, 1965.  
13. *Gaudium et Spes*, 43.



As we have seen, the theocratic idea of religion, absorbing and subordinating to itself every sphere of human life, looks very attractive. But such a totalitarian concept would destroy the legitimate autonomy of the secular sphere and alienate one religious group from another. While religion itself may be the highest value in man, historically concrete expressions of religion are affected by human imperfection. The votaries of religion and its leaders are marked by what Christians call Original Sin and, unless they conduct themselves with humility and continually open themselves to the truth, there is the constant danger of corruption. According to an old Latin saying, "the corruption of the best is the worst."

The identification of a particular religion with a particular culture today, more than ever, leads to rivalry and strife. Religions like Christianity and Islam which stress conversion will tend to alienate the neophytes from their original culture, while Hindu society will fear cultural alienation of the converts and ultimately separation on the national level. It will also be suspicious of internal cultural development lest it pose a danger to traditional religion, although such a feeling is now less prevalent.

One of the frequent triggers of communal riots is the "desecration" of places of worship or other material symbols of religion. Communal passions are aroused at the least appearance or rumour of such desecration. People are ready to kill hundreds of "living temples of God" for the sake of defending the honour of stone temples.

It is true that religious symbols should be respected. But there is need for a sense of proportion. Jesus has made it clear that "the hour is coming when neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father, . . . when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:21-22). Besides the termination of all particularisms, there is here a suggestion for all human beings, namely, that the human person is more sacred than anything else. The human person alone is made to the "image of God" (Gen 1:27) and all other signs of God are of relative value.

Hence, perhaps the most significant words of the Pope during his visit to India were in his introduction to the homily of his first Mass in Delhi: "At the beginning of my pilgrimage to the shrine which is the People of God living in this vast land of India . . ."<sup>14</sup> The cryptic

14. *Osservatore Romano*, 10 February 1986, p. 1.

words of St Irenaeus of old, "The glory of God is man fully alive", are most relevant in today's world.<sup>15</sup>

There is a meaning in the blessing and consecration of sacred places and objects, but their consequent sanctity must not be absolutized. In any dispute regarding such things, the paramount dignity and rights of the human person should not be lost sight of. In the past, there was the aberration of killing thousands of human persons to retrieve the Holy Cross or the Sepulchre of Jesus. We see such aberrations now in the death of thousands of people to defend the sanctity of a temple (*Harmandir Sahib* in Amritsar), which was already violated by armed criminal activity, or in the dispute of a spot claimed by one group as the birth place of their god (*Ram Janam Bhoomi*) and by another as dedicated to their worship (*Babari Masjid*). It is fortunate that the explosive situation in Nilakkal, when Christians wanted to build a shrine at the spot where they discovered an ancient Cross, and which also happened to be sacred to the Hindus, was resolved rather peacefully.

Once religious passions are roused it may be too late to restore a sense of proportion. It is therefore incumbent on all who wish to combat communalism to educate people regarding the primary value of the human person and human life even while inculcating due respect for religious symbols, whether one's own or of others.

(b) *Socio-economic Factors*. It does not need the perspicacity of a Marx to see that most communal tensions have a socio-economic dimension. In a situation with limited opportunities for obtaining the basic necessities of life, there is bound to be widespread frustration, especially among such classes as the educated unemployed youth. This could easily be exploited by interested parties or anti-social elements to provoke violent disturbances.

In countries like India, where the religious sentiment is particularly strong, what starts off as a socio-economic tension may result in communal violence. The vested interests can easily divert class animosity into communal flare-ups in which it is the poor who suffer most and who are made to battle against one another. Perhaps one of the reasons why the classical theory of Marx regarding class struggle has not been fully verified in India is that primitive communal passions take precedence over class interests.

In some cases, even linguistic antagonisms get related to religious

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15. *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, 7; V, 6, 1.

communalism. This happens when a particular language like Urdu or Punjabi is associated with a particular religion.

When people are divided on the lines of religious affiliation, socio-economic factors like employment opportunities enter into the communal picture. It has often been said that the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland is largely economic, a struggle between the wealthy Protestant class and the Catholic underdogs. The grave unrest in the Punjab too has such a component. The Green Revolution in the countryside enabled the Sikh peasant youth to get education. But they soon realized that the professions and trade in the towns were dominated by Hindus. Besides, as there are not enough prospects for all the Hindu youth, these also are in ferment and ready to join the communal fray. The ethnic conflict between the Sinhala Buddhists and Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka was also originally a socio-economic struggle as the latter, although a minority, had a proportionately greater share of jobs in the professions.

In many instances, although not as universally as Marxists would make out, social relations of production cause communal animosities. In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, Muslims work mostly as artisans and technicians in small businesses while the owners have been mostly Hindu. When Muslims artisans succeeded in becoming entrepreneurs, as it happened in Moradabad, a strong reaction set in among the Hindus which sparked off virulent riots in 1978.

(c) *Political dimension.*<sup>16</sup> Communalism is essentially political if politics is understood as the use of power. In a theocratic setup, politics is seen as an aspect of religion, which ends up being a tool of politics as in the present situation in Pakistan where the concept of Islamic Republic is used by the power elite to dominate the masses.

Even in a "secular state" or "plural democracy" like India, communal tensions run deep down. The sheer force of numbers tends to produce a Hindu image of the state. This is manifested, for instance, in such provisions as the ban on cow slaughter which is referred to even in the secular Constitution.<sup>17</sup> The constant fear of collusion between the state and the Hindu majority produces an adverse reaction among the minorities.

16. See Nirmala SRINIVASAN, "Majority Communalism vs Minority Communalism: Is it a Threat to Indian Nationalism?", *Religion and Society* 30 (1983), nos. 3 and 4, pp. 141-143.

17. Art. 14.

If we do not accept that "secular" culture is synonymous with an areligious conception of society based on mere material or technological values, the question arises as to what is the ideal of Indian culture. Militant Hindus view it in terms of *Rama-Rajya* in however wide and liberal way this is interpreted. Others would emphasize the plurality of cultures based on plurality of religions. But then Muslim culture tends to become inordinately Arabic-Persian, and Christian culture appears to be Western. Further, when there is a conversion movement, as we have already remarked, the spectre of secession arises which provokes a defensive reaction on the part of the majority Hindu community. Hinduism also has the tendency of assimilating or absorbing other communities under the guise of tolerance.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever be the merits of a multi-party democracy and universal adult franchise, elections in such a setup become a fertile battle ground for communal power struggle. While the so-called "communal" parties appeal to their particular community about the need for safeguarding its interests, the "secular" parties see in various religious groups vote banks to be exploited. Communalism enters into the choice of candidates and party workers. Subtle hints and at times even open promises are made concerning communal issues. The tension is aggravated by the press which provides detailed analysis of the communal make-up of each constituency and makes wild speculations about the outcome based on communal factors. Elections thus become communal battles.

Communalism has become a form of political struggle for the distribution of scarce resources and opportunities, or for the share of power in the form of posts and appointments. Nowhere is this communalisation of politics more manifest than in Kerala where the division of loaves and fishes is carried to absurd lengths.

When power brokers play the communal game wholly for selfish interests, the whole population is manipulated and democracy is reduced to a mockery. As usual, the poor suffer the most and have to bear the brunt of the periodic bouts of violence that arise. A large part of the press stokes communal fires, although it observes some discretion in reporting actual riots. Freedom of speech is thus grossly violated.

A question may be asked whether there is any place for communal parties in a secular setup. But as the secular parties also

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18. Cf. V.K. SINHA, "Secularization", *Seminar*, August 1977, no. 216, p. 38.

engage in the communal game for their narrow interests, the matter has to be probed further.

### *Role of the Church*

The Church must, first of all, understand the meaning of her Catholicity. It is not enough that she spread geographically in all the parts of the world. Following the Gospel injunction, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt 28:19), she has to proclaim her message to *different people as such*, with all their unique characteristics. In other words, she has to be inculturated in every culture without identifying herself with any culture. The Pope has stated this clearly in his address to the Bishops in India: "God's Revelation took place in a specific culture, but from the beginning it was destined for all cultures. It is the Church's task to bring the Good News of salvation to all cultures and to present it in a way that corresponds to the given culture of each people. The task at hand is the task of translating the true essence of faith in the originality of its contents into the legitimate variety of expressions of all the peoples of the world."<sup>19</sup>

In order to achieve this, there must be a clear realization that there is not and there cannot be such a thing as a universal Christian language, Christian music or any other form of art.

The Church is called upon to be the *instrument of integral salvation*, today working especially for *justice and liberation*. She is to be the *model of a new humanity*, of a just society, by realizing true brotherhood, justice and freedom in her own life. She should give the lead in *selfless* service. As a writer points out nicely: "The ideological commitment in favour of the poor . . . should be detached from the power interests of religion."<sup>20</sup>

Amidst virulent communal conflicts, the Church in India could be an instrument of *reconciliation*. According to Paul, the Church is entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation accomplished by the cross of Christ (2 Cor 5:18-21). As the mission of Christ was fulfilled by his kenotic existence culminating in the Cross (Phil 2:6-8) the *kenotic* or *self-emptying* mode of reconciliation is intrinsic to the

19. *Osservatore Romano*, 10 February, 1986, p. 2. The Pope was referring to Vatican II, *Ad Gentes* 22.

20. A.M. Abraham AYROOKUZHIL, "Religion and the Aspirations of the People", *Religion and Society* 30 (1983), nos. 3 and 4, p. 107.

Church's mission. As G. Pattery puts it, "it is imperative that she follow the same kenotic path, disengaging herself from 'power and glory' and from the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious power structures of the world."<sup>21</sup> This implies a prophetic denunciation of the unjust power structures, including religious, in order to proclaim a new humanity or society wherein all the distinctive features of various human groups do not become divisive, but contribute to a common enrichment.

The Church today has to foster a *dialogue* between different religious groups. The Pope has described dialogue as "to listen and to offer friendship and service."<sup>22</sup>

Selfless service and dialogue are admirable in themselves. But they should not be carried on in a way that makes Christians stand apart from the world or other religions. To the extent that there is any such dualism, the Church would not have a unique role to play in the midst of communal strife.

Vatican II provides some elements to take the reflection further. While the Church is described as a Spirit-filled community, she is also called "a kind of *sacrament of union* of all mankind."<sup>23</sup> The messianic people "is a lasting and sure *seed of unity*, hope and salvation for the whole human race."<sup>24</sup> "She serves as a *leaven and kind of soul* for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family."<sup>25</sup>

The Church is, therefore, *not external* to human society, however it is organized in the religious and secular sphere. She is, the *soul* or the *vital principle*, as it were, of human society. As *Lumen Gentium*, quoting a second century text, says, "What the soul is to the body, let Christians be to the world."<sup>26</sup>

Here the question of the very nature of Christianity arises. Is it only a religion like others, perhaps more perfect than others? If it were so, it would be difficult to see how it could be the "soul" of human society with its many religious and other societies.

It is often said that Christianity is the fulfilment of other religions in as much as the values in other religions find their fulfilment in

21. "Reconciliation: The Bearing of Paul on the Synodal Theme", *Vidyajyoti*, 44 (1982) 449-456.

22. Address to Bishops of India in New Delhi, *Osservatore Romano*, 10 February, 1986, p. 1.

23. *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

24. *Lumen Gentium*, 9.

25. *Gaudium et Spes*, 40.

26. No. 38. *Letter to Diognetus*, 6.

the messianic community founded by Christ. Could we perhaps go further and say that *Christianity is not a religion comparable to others* and confronting others in either friendly or inimical spirit? Christians, according to the same ancient text, "are not marked off from the rest of men by their government nor by their language, nor by their political institutions."<sup>27</sup>

When Jesus proclaims to the Samaritan woman a new worship "in spirit and in truth," he inaugurates a new way in which men will worship in complete authenticity, transcending every particularism.<sup>28</sup> Reflecting on the same text, a recent writer remarks: "By this Jesus seems to mean that true worship is a worship which is beyond all rituals and localization and has an interiority when man moved by the Holy Spirit, stands before God with all sincerity and openness, being united with the eternal truth which is identical with Jesus, and establishes a filial relationship with God, calling Him 'Abba!'"<sup>29</sup> The message of Jesus envisages the possibility of going beyond all man-made boundaries "and of acknowledging a transcendental reality of communion in which all men are children of the same Father, God, and are brothers and sisters among themselves."<sup>30</sup>

In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke presents Christianity, not as a new "sect" but as the *Way* (*he hodos*: 9:2). Paul is said to explain that the nascent Christianity is not a sect, but a way of life (24:14), a life rooted in faith in Jesus Christ. It is a companionship of those believers who transcend racial, social and sexual discriminating principles (cf. Gal 3:28; Col 3:10-11; 1 Cor 12:13).

Christianity as a Way, a movement is not meant to be constricted into a system, a structure, however open it may be to others. Hence, the crucial question is whether Jesus came to found another religion or to bring religion to an end if religion is understood in the accepted sense of a closed system of beliefs, rites and mores.

However, no movement can last without a measure of organization. So it is natural that Christianity developed into a community. The visibility of Christianity with its unique features is needed for its sacramental role. Still, this community, if it is to be faithful to itself, has to be essentially charismatic and not power structure or rigid institution. It must retain its essentially pilgrim and sacramental nature. Its members in a given society should not have any

27. No. 5, cited in Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 15.

28. Cf. LEON MORRIS, *Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Eerdmans, 1971, p. 270.

29. LUCIUS NEREPARAMPIL, "Jesus and the Nations", *Jeevadhara* 14 (1984) 147.

30. *Ibid.*

peculiar interests or style of life. They should be distinguished rather by the spirit of the Beatitudes even while being entirely attuned to their fellowmen.

Michael Amaladoss has rightly pointed out that the Church as a sacrament must make present a *mystery* of God's universal salvific love that transcends it. "On the one hand, it is a symbolic realization; this makes it a witnessing community. On the other hand, it is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, though it is committed to strive for the ever fuller realization of the mystery."<sup>31</sup> However, the "witnessing community" must function more as a "ferment and leaven" rather than as an extrinsic model. The sacraments of the Church must be understood not in a spirit of ritualism but as celebrations of life, both of the members and of the whole human family. Baptism itself would be a commitment in the ecclesial community to live out the new way that Jesus has come to show the world. It would imply membership in a communion that strives for universal communion without seeking any narrow interests.

In fact, as a community, the Church has a history, a tradition, a socio-cultural identity which has been infected with grave imperfections. For instance, a veteran missionary, Fr Hans Staffner, admits that Christianity came to India with: 1) Western political power; 2) Western cultural outlook; 3) Western sectarianism.<sup>32</sup> Hence it has the very difficult task of shedding this garb. Some may find it as impossible as peeling an onion in order to reach the core. But the task has to be attempted.

It is even more important to renounce all communalism in the spirit of kenosis after the example of Jesus Christ. There should be no defence of sectarian interests. Issues like discrimination against scheduled caste converts should be tackled on the basis of human rights.

Once the Church is ready to transcend the narrow confines of a closed structure and move along the path of self-emptying, she would be ready to render her specific service to counteract the grave evil of communalism. Not only will Christians be able to work actively for reconciliation and harmony among various groups, but they will also be able to encourage and develop the elements of understanding and brotherhood already found in each religion.

31. "Dialogue and Mission", *Vidyajyoti*, 30 (1986) 70.

32. See *Significance of Jesus Christ in Asia*, Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1955, pp. 206-218.



A cosmic vision and a remarkable spirit of tolerance in Hinduism could develop into a really universal spirit of brotherhood and positive respect for all human and religious values.

The strong bond of brotherhood in the Islamic community could be extended to people of other faiths. Indian Muslims, on the whole, accept the secular state if it guarantees religious freedom to all its citizens.<sup>33</sup> Apart from the fundamentalists, they are open to reform in Muslim personal law, provided it is according to basic Islamic principles. Some like the ex-Minister Arif Mohammed Khan are ready to make personal sacrifices in defence of human rights. At present very few are ready to accept a common civil code as they fear that the identity of the Muslim community may be thereby jeopardized. A too militant advocacy of the same from Hindus does not give them reassurance. It is for Christians to give the lead in promoting a uniform civil code that does not violate the basic tenets of any religious group, even though such a code cannot be abruptly imposed.

Sikh leaders today insist that in Sikhism, religion and politics are inseparable. But Sikhism in its foundational period did perceive the distinction between the holy and the profane.<sup>34</sup> By rejecting the excesses of Brahminism, it highlighted such essentials of religion as faith, truthful living and prayer. The vicissitudes of history, like political subjugation by the Mughals and the British rulers and the trauma of partition in 1947 with its mass killings and migration, have created a strong socio-religious identity. Of late, political machinations have resulted in a politicization of the Sikh faith. However, by a return to the original inspiration and the absorption of modern humanistic ideals, Sikhism can make a positive contribution to national integration. A more active dialogue with Christians would help in weaning Sikhs from the path of extremism and separation.

### *Conclusion*

Ultimately, all religions have to face the challenge of modernization, technology and massive poverty. This is a common task for all children of God and it is only a common dedication to it, according to the positive insights of each religion, that can bring about communal amity.

33. See Mushirul HAQ, *art. cit.*, pp. 37-47.

34. See Attar SINGH, "Secularism in the Sikh Faith", *Religion and Society* 25 (1978) no. 3, p. 53.

Here the Christian faith, as it has been reflected on in the light of Vatican II and the biblical renewal, can play a singular role. For this, Christians have to recapture the original message of Jesus and be ready to pursue the path of self-emptying by totally renouncing any narrow and sectarian communalism. Then the Church can truly become the "sacrament of unity of all mankind" and "a leaven and soul of human society," especially in an India now faced with unprecedented communal strife.

The task is admittedly very difficult, especially given the intensity of communal feelings on all sides and the heavy institutionalization of the Church, implying vested interests, as well as its close links with Western culture. But the task has to be accomplished, beginning with a clear vision of the true nature and mission of the Church. Now when all religions and cultures seem to be in a flux, there is no question of a rigid blueprint or on a priori programme of action. However, there is need for a certain responsible nationalism<sup>35</sup> and a commitment to liberation and nation building together with all people of good will.

35. Cf. 1971 Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, no. 17.

(Continued from page 280)

break the social barriers and the marginalized can receive their just share of the wealth of God's earth.

The second part is entitled: "The Eucharist/Last Supper: Sacrament and Action-Sign of the Kingdom". Jesus was not merely a spiritual leader. He did not approve of the status quo and wanted to bring changes in the political, economic and social structures of first-century Palestine. By celebrating the Eucharist the followers of Jesus continue the work of human liberation which Jesus started. In order to feed the hungry, "the patterns of food distribution must change" (93).

Some of the suggestions which the author makes like "hunger committees", "hunger liturgies," fund raising and soup dinners in Lent are only for the people of the United States. In the Indian context of massive poverty and injustice they are not relevant. One may doubt whether the distribution pattern can be changed through any such activities. This is a challenging book. A useful appendix is added on: "Modern Statements by Christian Churches and the Problem of Hunger."

Varghese PUTHUSSERY, S.J.

**Inculturation through Basic Communities. An Indian Perspective.** By Joseph Prasad PINTO, o.f.m. cap. Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 1985. Pp. xvi-273. Rs. 35, US \$ 9.

Fr Prasad's article in the pages of the Journal this month gives a sufficient idea of the rich content and orientation of this doctoral thesis approved recently by the Faculty of Missiology of the Gregorian University. But an article cannot, obviously, condense the richness of a thesis that covers an important area of contact between culture and faith from a historical and missiological angle. Readers will be grateful for an abundant bibliography (down to 1983) on Basic Christian Communities and for the rich if less exhaustive bibliography on Inculturation in the Indian context. The author is convinced that "the new way of 'being the Church' will arrive (through the Basic Communities). In India, it will be a Church deeply rooted in the Indian values of religiosity, poverty, joy and festivity" (253). Missiologists and ecclesiologists will take note of this valuable book.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.

# Marxism in Recent Vatican Doctrine

J. KOTTUKAPALLY, S.J.

**I**T is instructive to analyse the Vatican doctrine in relation to Marxism during the past quarter of a century, that is to say, from John XXIII to the present time. In this first of two articles, we shall analyse the papal doctrine from *Mater et Magistra* through to *Laborem Exercens*. The following article will be devoted to the current doctrine of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

## *The Church Weighs Anchor*

John XXIII, in his trail-blazing social encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (1961), called upon Catholics to involve themselves vigorously in socio-political life, without any compromise "in matters wherein the integrity of religion or morals" was at stake, and "to join sincerely in doing whatever is naturally good or conducive to good" with others "who do not share their view of life" (239).<sup>1</sup>

Pope John returned to this theme and developed it in his peace encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (1963).

The exceptional significance of this encyclical, which has been called "the testament of Pope John", bears stressing. This was the encyclical through which the head of the Catholic Church, for the first time ever, solemnly addressed not only Catholics but "all men of good will." It was conceived by the eighty-two year old Pope, with the certain foreknowledge of his own impending death of cancer, in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis for whose peaceful resolution he had played his own discreet but nonetheless effective role. It was released on Maundy Thursday, 11 April, 1963; and Pope John died, hardly eight weeks later, on June 3.

After quoting *Mater et Magistra* to stress again the necessity of uncompromising faith coupled with the readiness to collaborate with all men and women of good will in the pursuit of noble causes (157),

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1. Numbers within brackets, unless they obviously refer to the year, refer to sections.

the Pope makes two distinctions, since become classical, between "error and the person who errs" (158) and between "false philosophical teachings" and "historical movements" originating from them (159).

If error demands firm resistance, even condemnation, the person who errs "is always and above all a human being, and in every case retains his dignity as a human person," and hence "must always be treated in accordance with that lofty dignity" (158). And whereas "teachings, once they are drawn up and defined, remain always the same," historical movements "cannot but be influenced by changing historical situations" and subject to changes, "even of a profound nature" (159).<sup>2</sup> "Besides," the Pope asks rhetorically, "who can deny that those movements, in so far as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval?" (159).

Hence the inevitable conclusion: "It can happen, then, that meetings for the attainment of some practical end, which formerly were deemed inopportune and unproductive, might now or in the future be considered opportune and useful" (160).

The message of such an analysis and conclusion and its practical significance was lost on nobody. No one needed to be told that the "historical movements" the Pope referred to were none other than the socialist and communist movements, or that "meetings for the attainment of some practical end," in the context of the imminent general elections in Italy, meant nothing other than political dialogue and co-operation. And so there was no question but that Pope John meant effectively to lift the ban imposed by Pius XII in 1949 on any kind of political support of or collaboration with communists. This was also the reason why there was considerable conservative pressure for at least the postponement of the release of the encyclical until after the elections. The Pope resisted this pressure and gave his solemn parting message to the world on Maundy Thursday itself. And, it is said, *Pacem in Terris* cost the Christian Democratic Party, formerly taken to be the Church's own party, four million votes in that election.

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2. We need not take the unchanging character of doctrines as absolute. Doctrines do change and develop, as Newman told us nearly a century ago, and, especially, as Pope John himself has so clearly taught us through his Council.

### *A Chart and Compass*

It is well known that, in terms of not only background and upbringing but also outlook and attitude, Paul VI was of a very different cast from his predecessor. However, on the question of dialogue and of its necessity in today's world, he truly built upon the foundation laid by John XXIII. In fact, Paul VI's programmatic encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), was dominated by the theme of dialogue. Paul VI expounded his doctrine of dialogue, using it for more than half the length (58-119) of the encyclical. The principles of this doctrine may be summarised as follows.

In a world shrunk into a global village in terms of communication and inter-dependence, dialogue is indispensable and vital. Through dialogue one seeks to communicate with others in depth, to understand others whose convictions and world views are different from or opposed to one's own, and to be understood by them. The fundamental attitude of one who engages in dialogue is thus characterised by consideration and esteem for others. "He detests bigotry and prejudice, malicious and indiscriminate hostility, and empty boastful speech" (79). He knows and acknowledges that no group or system can ever claim any sort of monopoly of truth. Besides, as the dialogue of salvation "did not depend on the merits of those with whom it was initiated nor on the results it would be likely to achieve," neither "should we set limits to our dialogue or seek it to our advantage" (74).

The object of dialogue is not to convert the partner to one's own point of view, but to "help him and to dispose him for a fuller sharing of ideas and convictions" (79). This does not mean lack of apostolic zeal on the part of the Christian engaged in dialogue. He fully "realises the seriousness of the apostolic mission" and "sees his own salvation as inseparable from the salvation of others" (80).

In dialogue, in which "truth is wedded to charity and understanding with love" (82), it becomes obvious that "there are various ways of coming to the light of faith and that it is possible to make all converge on the same goal" (83):

However divergent these ways may be, they can often serve to complete each other. They encourage us to think on different lines. They force us to go more deeply into the subject of our investigations and to find better ways of expressing ourselves. It will be a slow process of thought, but it will result in the discovery of elements of truth in the opinions of others and make us

want to express our doctrine with great fairness. It will be to our credit that we expound our doctrine in such a way that others can respond to it, if they will, and assimilate it gradually (83).

Dialogue is not only unencumbered by prejudice; it also refuses "to hold fast to forms of expression which have lost their meaning and can no longer stir men's minds" (85). Following the example of the Word of God, who became man in order to enter into a saving dialogue with humankind, the Christian intending to engage in dialogue must "forego all privilege and the use of unintelligible language, and adopt the way of life of ordinary people in all that is human and honourable" (85). "Indeed, we must adopt the way of life of the most humble people, if we wish to be listened to and understood" (87). Moreover, "before speaking, we must take great care to listen not only to what men say, but, more especially, to what they have it in their heart to say" (87). "All this we must remember and strive to put into practice on the example and precept of Christ" (87).

### *On Steady Course*

Universal dialogue and co-operation was naturally a basic theme of the Second Vatican Council. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Decree on the Apostleship of the Laity deal with this theme specifically and concretely.

The former of these two documents, which was conceived in the Council hall, is said to breathe the Council's spirit as no other document, and may be justly considered a *Summa* of the Good News according to the Council, a *Summa Ad Gentiles*, declares, after discussing various forms of contemporary atheism: "While wholly rejecting atheism, the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of the world in which all live together. Such an ideal cannot be realised, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue" (21).

The theme of universal dialogue and co-operation recurs constantly in the lengthy document. However, it is specifically taken up again in the concluding section, where we read the solemn words:

Mindful of the Lord's saying, "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35), Christians cannot yearn for anything more ardently than to serve the men of the modern world ever more generously and effectively. Therefore, holding faithfully to the

Gospel and benefiting from its resources, and united with every man who loves and practices justice, Christians have shouldered a gigantic task demanding fulfilment in this world. Concerning this task they must give a reckoning to Him who will judge every man on the last day (93).

The Council never mentions Marxism, but no one need doubt that its discussion of atheism has Marxism very much in focus or that the "systematic atheism" it discusses in section 20 is Marxism. It may also be recalled, with poignant nostalgia, that the Council, in decidedly opting in favour of dialogue and co-operation, had firmly rejected the demand by a clamorous minority of a formal condemnation of Marxism and that one of the most vigorous and effective spokesmen of the majority was the present Pope. Intervening in the discussion on the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, he had said:

This document is a *dialogue*, and we cannot begin a dialogue by condemning the people we want to talk to. And, furthermore, those of us who live in the Communist countries are beginning to see some self-questioning among the Marxist intellectuals. If we condemn them, they won't ever open the document; if we don't, maybe they will read it and see what the Church has to say about the great problems of the world. We may find that we can work together in more ways than we think.<sup>3</sup>

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity resonant with the theme of universal dialogue and co-operation, is more specific than the former document regarding the areas of such dialogue and co-operation. The Decree clarifies that lay people are as properly and as much apostles as priests and religious, and that the "temporal order," including, in particular, the world of national and transnational politics, is the proper apostolic field of the laity.

Speaking of the "vast field for the apostolate . . . opened up on the national and international levels where most of all the laity are called upon to be the stewards of Christian wisdom," the Council declares: "Catholics should try to co-operate with all men and women of good will to promote whatever is true and just, whatever is holy and worth loving (cf. Phil 4:8). They should hold discussions with them, excelling them in prudence and courtesy, and initiate research on social and public practices which can be improved in the spirit of the Gospel" (14).

3. Quoted by François Houtart, *The Eleventh Hour: Explosion of a Church*, London, Burns & Oates, 1968, p. 64—emphasis of the original. Elsewhere, too, where it is not otherwise stated, emphases will be of the original.

Towards the conclusion of this document, the Council again returns to this theme and provides the theological justification for universal collaboration: "Human values not infrequently call for co-operation between Christians pursuing apostolic aims and men who do not profess Christ's name but acknowledge these values. By this dynamic and prudent co-operation, which is of special importance in temporal activities, the laity bear witness to Christ, the Saviour of the world, as well as the unity of the human family" (27).

### *New Horizons*

To see Paul VI's social encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, in proper perspective, we must keep a few facts in mind. Paul VI was a Milanese and Milan was Italy's industrial capital, with a labour force dominated by the Communists. As archbishop of Milan (1954-1963), Cardinal Montini had been pastor of a flock a good proportion of which belonged not only to Communist trade unions but also to the Communist Party. Besides, the years immediately following the Council were a period of almost universal and dynamic optimism. After the Cuban missile crisis, superpower relations had unexpectedly suddenly improved to such an extent that, in less than a year of the crisis, the Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed, resulting in the end of atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons. In the United States, President Johnson could confidently speak of the "Great Society," while Martin Luther King (Jr) pressed on with his Gandhian struggle for the civic rights of the Blacks. In the Soviet Union, people still breathed the fresh air let in by the Krushchev reforms, in terms of both improved standard of living and civic rights for the ordinary citizen. Western Europe was experiencing the peak of its post-war regeneration due to both "economic miracles" and national and international reconciliation whose roots struck deep. In far-off Latin America (90 per cent Catholics), the Church of the poor was stirring with newly kindled hope. Latin America, which the US ruled as cold-bloodedly and ruthlessly as any past imperialism, but with ultra-modern techniques, was making an effort to assert itself through popular struggles. Such, briefly, was the *Sitz im Leben* of *Populorum Progressio*.

A radical commitment to justice, coupled with a sense of urgency for profound structural changes in social relations on the national and trans-national levels, was the dominant characteristic of *Populorum Progressio*, which did not hesitate to condemn capitalist neo-colonialism as "unchecked liberalism" and the "international im-



perialism of money" (26), or to call for urgent reforms "to be undertaken without delay," "bold transformations, innovations that go deep" (32). No wonder that this papal document became the *magna carta* for Latin American liberation struggles as well as a primary source of the theology of liberation; no wonder that the Wall Street Journal found in this document "warmed-over Marxism."

Paul VI's analyses of the world situation and its dominant ideology show close affinity to Marxist analyses. Thus, for example, the Pope does not hesitate to name *capitalism* and to describe it as the system "which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation" (26). "This unchecked liberalism," "has been the source of excessive suffering, injustices and fratricidal conflicts whose effects still persist." And so, "one cannot condemn such abuses too strongly by solemnly recalling once again that economy is at the service of man" (26).

In the clearest terms the Pope asserts the *right* of the poor for the necessities of life. Quoting the words of St Ambrose, he tells the rich: "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all, and not only to the rich" (23). Private property "does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditioned right. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities." "If there should arise a conflict," continues the Pope, quoting from a recent French document, 'between acquired property rights and primary community exigencies,' it is the responsibility of public authorities 'to look for a solution, with the active participation of individuals and social groups' " (23).

All this is not Marxist doctrine exactly. The Pope does not refrain from positively criticising Marxist trends indirectly when he warns against the "dangerous temptation" of "violent popular reactions, agitations towards insurrection, and a drifting toward totalitarian ideologies" (30). But it is significant that, in contrast to capitalism, Paul VI never mentions Marxism even while criticising it. Moreover, though he warns against "the recourse to violence" as "grave temptation," the focus of his analyses is the prevailing "situations whose injustice cries to heaven" (30); and so he allows for *revolutionary up-*

risings "where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country" (31), even if it is the case that a revolutionary uprising, as a rule, "produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disasters" (31).

Again, it is evidently with Marxism in mind that the Pope rejects "materialistic philosophies, which respect neither the religious orientation of life to its final end, nor human freedom and dignity," as a doctrine suitable to base social action upon. However, he qualifies the rejection by adding immediately, "provided that these values are safeguarded, a pluralism of professional organisations and trade unions is admissible, and from certain points of view useful, if thereby liberty is protected and emulation is stimulated" (39). Thus the Pope, not only endorses critical collaboration with Marxists in programmes and projects of social action, but also allows for Christian membership in Marxist-led trade unions and other professional organisations—with critical caution in respect of the problems indicated.<sup>4</sup>

### *Storm Signal*

We find Paul VI speaking in a quite different tone and with quite different stresses in the Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens* in 1971. These new tones and stresses are clearly at variance from those of the papal teachings of the entire previous decade, though the variance would seem to still remain within the limits of compatibility.

Here again, a brief consideration of the context should be helpful. In August 1968 Warsaw pact tanks had rolled through the streets of Prague to crush the Communist reform, vigorously initiated by the Czechoslovakian Communist Party under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek. This Soviet dictated military action in Czechoslovakia also effectively killed Christian-Marxist dialogue in Europe. If Euro-Communism still held forth, it did so as a heresy, if not condemned, at least frowned upon by the Kremlin inquisitors. Perhaps even more important, Paul VI had personally witnessed the revolutionary ferment

4. Cf. my work, *The Hope We Share*, Dialogue Series, 1983, Epilogue, "A Marxist Christian?". It may be useful to keep in mind that membership even in the Marxist Party is determined by the Party Programme, which will appreciably differ from Party to Party and from period to period, and not by Marxist ideology or philosophy which is supposed to be the same everywhere and always.

in Latin America, during his visit to that continent in the same August 1968 to take part in the International Eucharistic Congress in Bogota. What he encountered and experienced there evidently made him concerned, if not alarmed.<sup>5</sup> In August-September that year, the famous Medellin Conference (Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops) had given the green signal to a new kind of theology that was growing up in the Basic Ecclesial Communities of the militant poor under the name "theology of liberation."

In *Octogesima Adveniens* Paul VI explicitly discusses socialism and Marxism (31-34). The Pope notes that some Christians are today "attracted by socialist currents and their various developments," even tending to "idealise it (socialism) in terms that are . . . very general." He feels concerned that "they refuse to recognise the limitations of the historical socialist movements, which remain conditioned by the ideologies from which they originated," and stresses the need for clear insight "to see the degree of commitment possible" in the socialist movements (31).

Proceeding to Marxism Paul VI wonders (as though he was referring to a recent phenomenon, as though he was not acquainted with *Pacem in Terris* and *Populorum Progressio*!) that "other Christians even ask whether an historical development of Marxism might not authorise certain concretis rapproachments" (32). These Christians base their positive approach a Marxism, not only on the splintering of world Marxism, but also on the distinction they make "between Marxism's various levels of expression" (32).

For some, Marxism remains essentially the active practice of class struggle . . . . For others, it is first and foremost the collective exercise of political and economic power under the direction of a single party, which would be the sole expression and guarantee of the welfare of all, and would deprive individuals and other groups of any possibility of initiative and choice. At a third level, Marxism, whether in power or not, is viewed as a socialist ideology based on historical materialism and the denial of everything transcendent. At other times, finally, it presents itself in a more attenuated form, one also more attractive to the modern mind: as a scientific activity, as a vigorous method of examining social and political reality, and as a rational link, tested by history, between theoretical knowledge and the practice of revolutionary transformation (33).

Whereas John XXIII had taken care to stress the *distinction* between ideology and historical movements originating from them,

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5. Cf. Alain GHEERBRANT, *The Rebel Church in Latin America*, Penguin Books, 1974.

as well as the viability, indeed, desirability, of people of different or even, divergent ideological convictions working together.<sup>6</sup> Paul VI here stresses just the opposite. Says he:

While, through the concrete existing forms of Marxism, one can distinguish these various aspects and the questions they pose for the reflection and activity of Christians, it would be illusory and dangerous to reach a point of forgetting the intimate link which radically binds them together, to accept the elements of Marxist analysis without recognising their relationship with ideology, and to enter into the practice of class struggle and its Marxist interpretations, while failing to note the kind of totalitarian and violent society to which this process leads (34).

We should not miss the sophistication in Paul VI's careful argumentation. He is *not* either banning or declaring simply impossible all use of elements of Marxist analysis, separating them from the ideology; rather, he stresses the necessity of this discerning separation. He makes this point all the more clear when he proceeds to stress a similar danger concealed in the "liberal ideology." Even when it seeks to evolve "new models," adapted to contemporary needs, "at the very root of liberalism there is an erroneous affirmation of the autonomy of the individual in his activity, his motivation and the exercise of his liberty" (35).

Furthermore, Paul VI does not want the Christian to stand paralysed in the face of such problems of theoretical discernment. Rather, he calls for discernment *in the midst of practical commitment* and the *transcendence* of every system and ideology *from within*, when he now lays down the key principle: "Going beyond every system, without however failing to commit himself concretely to serving his brothers, he will assert in the very midst of his options the specific character of the Christian contribution for a positive transformation of society" (36).

Before passing on, one must sadly note that both the Final Document of Puebla (544) and the 1984 Instruction (VII:7) have, advisedly or otherwise, failed to grasp the balance and sophistication of Paul VI's doctrine, when they simply quote his warning against undiscerning use of elements of Marxist ideology and *omit* his equally clear warning against the danger concealed in the "liberal ideology" as well as his final emphasis on the necessity of practical commitment in the cause of justice.

Paul VI does not look back with nostalgia on the lost "ideal" of

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6. Cf. above, p. 251.

the pre-capitalist "Christian social order," as did Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*.<sup>7</sup> Coming from Vatican II, Paul VI knows that there is no "Christian social order" possible in a pluralistic world. He is realistic enough to accept that there is only one-way traffic in history, no matter how much the past has to offer to build up the future, and that ideological differences and incompatibilities need and should not stand in the way of practical co-operation. He knows, too, that the ideal "Christian social order" is something in itself transcendent, but that it is and has to be *transcendent in immanence*, and, therefore, to be pursued "in the very midst" of practical options, which may be different from or even opposed to each other.<sup>8</sup>

### *Siren Call?*

Contrary to what one might have now come to expect, Pope John Paul II's encyclical on labour, *Laborem Exercens* (1981), shows such striking affinities to Marxism that they must be characterised as consciously accepted influences.

John Paul II echoes Marx and Engels, not Augustine and Aquinas, when he defines man in terms of work:

Work is one of the characteristics that distinguishes man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth. Thus work bears the particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons. And this mark decides its interior characteristics; in a sense it constitutes its very nature (Introduction).<sup>9</sup>

Using a phraseology hardly distinguishable from that of the so-called Marxist analysis, the Pope speaks of the world situation:

A complete analysis of the situation of the world today shows in an even deeper and fuller way the meaning of the previous analysis of social injustices; and it is the meaning that must be given today to efforts to build justice on earth, not concealing thereby unjust structures but demanding that they be examined and transformed on a universal scale (2, p. 11).

7. *Quadragesimo Anno*, 97.

8. We read in the *Church in the Modern World*: "Christians must recognise that various legitimate though conflicting view can be held concerning the regulation of temporal affairs. They should respect their fellow citizens when they promote such views honourably even by group action" (75).

9. Considering that the sections of *Laborem Exercens* are exceptionally long, I shall be giving page references to St Paul Publications edition (Bombay, 1981) alongside section numbers. Engels' essay, "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man", MARX-ENGELS, *Selected Works*, Moscow 1949, Vol. I, pp. 74-85, may be usefully read in this connection.

Reminding one of Marx's analysis of "Estranged Labour," in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, John Paul II refuses to let man, the worker, be "treated as an instrument of production" (7, p. 22).<sup>10</sup> "As a person, man is the subject of work" (6, p. 18), its "primary basis and value" (6, p. 20), as well as its "purpose" (7, p. 21). "As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process. Independently of their objective content, these actions must serve to realise his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity" (6, p. 17).

John Paul II is again in Marxist company when he lays down "the principle of priority of labour over capital" in the economic process and affirms that "in this process labour is always a primary efficient cause, while capital, the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere instrument or instrumental cause." He adds: "This principle is an evident truth that emerges from the whole of man's historical experience" (12, p. 34).

Marxists should find no difficulty to follow the Pope when he names capitalism to attribute to it the "reversal" of the right and proper order, as above described, and proceeds to warn that "the error of early capitalism can be repeated wherever man is in a way treated on the same level as the whole complex of the material means of production, as an instrument, and not in accordance with the true dignity of his work—that is to say, where he is not treated as subject and maker and, for this very reason, as the true purpose of the very process of production" (7, p. 22).

This is hardly how capitalism's Lawgiver, Adam Smith, or his later-day prophets and followers would speak; neither would they relish the Pope's decided rejection of the thesis that "capital is the basis, efficient factor and purpose of production" (8, p. 24).

Rejecting as well the classical capitalist dogma of the absolute and inviolable character of the right to private property, the Pope says:

Christian tradition has never upheld this right as absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creation: the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use (14, p. 41).

At least twice over again he stresses this "first principle of the whole

10. As already noted, unless otherwise stated, stresses are of the original.

ethical and social order" (19, p. 55; also 14, p. 42).

To be sure, John Paul II equally rejects the classical Marxist dogma of the radical collectivisation of the means of production, or, as he formulates it negatively, "*an a priori elimination of private ownership of the means of production*" (14, p. 44). But, "in consideration of human labour and of common access to the goods meant for man, one cannot exclude the *socialisation*, in suitable conditions, of certain means of production" (14, p. 42).

More significantly still, the Pope concedes that, even under a system of collectivisation, such as actually obtains in Socialist countries "in which private ownership has been limited even in a radical way" (15, p. 45), the new bureaucratic and managerial group "may carry out its task satisfactorily from the point of view of the priority of labour" (14, p. 44).

John Paul II naturally stresses the value of the workers' *solidarity* and the importance of unions (20). These, however, are not merely "a reflections of the 'class' structure of society" or "a mouthpiece for a class struggle which inevitably governs social life." But they "are indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice, for the just rights of the working people in accordance with their individual professions" (20, p. 59).

Now the Pope makes a typically scholastic distinction, presumably to mark off the right kind of struggle from what he thinks is class struggle in the Marxist sense. He says:

However, this struggle should be seen as a normal endeavour 'for' the just good: in the present case, for the good which corresponds to the needs and merits of the working people associated by profession; *but is not a struggle 'against' others*. Even if in controversial questions the struggle takes on a character of opposition towards others, this is because it aims at the good of social justice, not for the sake of 'struggle' or in order to eliminate the opponent (*ibid.*).

The insinuation evidently is that Marxists conceive of class struggle as a struggle "for the sake of struggle" and "in order to eliminate the opponent." Such an insinuation, one must plainly say, originates not from any sort of fair and objective knowledge of Marxism, but from prejudice. At least if one considers plain Marxist theory—and I consider it only fair and proper that theory be compared to theory—class struggle is conceived *not* as an end in itself, but as an inevitable *evil* which has marked the whole of history and

which must now be decisively *countenanced and overcome* through the united struggle of the world proletariat. Neither is this Marxist doctrine concealed away in some secret document; it can be read in the most important and popular of the Marxist documents, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The Manifesto concludes the section "Proletarians and Communists" thus:

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the pre-condition for the free development of all.

One can surely raise very serious questions about the realism and attainability of such a vision, about the intrinsic contradictions and terrible practical dangers concealed in the will to usher in the classless society through nothing more than class struggle.<sup>11</sup> But that is quite different from insinuating that class struggle is, for the Marxists, "for the sake of 'struggle' or to eliminate the opponent." If, in the course of struggle, some people—on both sides, and indeed many more of the protagonists of the struggle—do indeed get eliminated, that situation is nothing intrinsically different from the situation of a "just" war in which many do, *alas*, get eliminated.

A further remark on the role of work and on workers' solidarity and struggle may be permitted here. Rather surprisingly, the encyclical on labour fails to expound a theology of work in its relation to Christ's redemptive Work, in its relation to the Kingdom of God ushered in by Him. This omission would seem to be all the more striking because Vatican II has at least provided many hints for such a theology in its key document.

What is, however, immediately pertinent is that, whatever criticisms it may call for, Marxism does have a truly exalted vision

11. Cf. *The Hope We Share* (see note 4 above), chapters 6-8.



of work and the workers' role, as can be clearly seen in the passage cited above.

According to an early work of Karl Marx, labour is the "stern but steeling school" which the proletariat must pass through in fulfilling their historic mission to abolish "all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation."<sup>12</sup>

Lenin, in two of his most important works, deals specifically with the question. In *What is To Be Done?* (1902), he sharply distinguishes mere "trade-union consciousness," which is concerned only for the workers' own economic and professional interests (in John Paul II's words, "the rights of the working people in accordance with their individual professions"), from "socialist consciousness," or "class consciousness," whose focus is far beyond (though not apart from) the workers' own interests in the liberation and re-constitution of society as a whole. In *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), Lenin bitterly and mercilessly castigates the "labour aristocracy" in the advanced, especially imperialist countries, where the labour movement "has grown ripe, over-ripe and rotten, and has become completely merged with the bourgeois policy in the form of 'social chauvinism'."<sup>13</sup>

Let us conclude with another contextual note. Pope John Paul II wrote *Laborem Exercens* certainly with the Polish Solidarity, which was at that time a vigorous national movement and seemed to hold a promise similar to that in Czechoslovakia under Dubcek. The Pope probably conceived the encyclical as a sort of charter for relatively autonomous labour organisations under socialist regimes, with which he sought some sort of accommodation. That will probably explain, at least in part, its positive and, apparently, consciously affirmed influences of Marxism. To say this is not to limit the scope and relevance of the encyclical. It must be accepted as what it explicitly purports to be, that is to say, magisterial doctrine addressed to the universal Church "and to all men and women of good will."

(to be continued)

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12. *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company* (1945), MARX/ENGELS, *Collected Works*, Moscow 1975, Vol. IV, p. 37.

13. V.I. LENIN, *Selected Works*, Two-Volume Edition, Moscow 1947, Vol. I, p. 710.

# Basic Communities and Inculturation

J. Prasad PINTO, o.f.m. cap.\*

**T**HE Indian Church needs a new face, a genuinely Indian image. This can be attained only if the Indian Christian community seeks to be deeply inculturated and rooted in its religio-cultural heritage and in its socio-economic milieu. Since the local community, living in spontaneity and creativity, is the primary agent of inculturation, it is my belief that the basic Christian communities (BCCs) are the ideal place for an all-round inculturation. Basic or grass-roots communities are today's reality. They have emerged almost in all the continents in different socio-cultural milieus, not only in the Church but also in other world religions and social systems. In Latin America alone they number today almost 150,000. Their inculturation potential is immense.<sup>1</sup>

## *Reasons for the Emergence of the Basic Communities*

There are several socio-economic and religio-cultural reasons<sup>2</sup> that explain the emergence of the new forms of community in this age. It is self-evident that man is a communal being and that community is as old as man himself. Every one is born in a community and belongs to one or more. Only through community life can man satisfy his fundamental needs, such as to love and to be loved, to belong to a group, to be accepted, to participate, to share common values, to be protected, etc. By doing so he also binds himself in communal ties and establishes the basis for interpersonal relationships. In general a community is characterized by the cohesion of its members, their common goals, a distribution of roles, a sense of sharing. In recent years various factors, such as the anonymity, massification and alienation which arise from industrialization, urbanization and the consequent bureaucracy have disturbed the

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1. For a detailed study, see Joseph Prasad PINTO, *Inculturation through Basic Communities. An Indian Perspective*. Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation 1985. In this article I have kept the number of footnotes to the minimum.

2. Cf. C.M. OLSEN, *The Base Church Creating Community through Multiple Forms*, Atlanta 1973, pp. 21-34.

community life and the existing institutions and organizations have failed to satisfy the human needs in this new situation. Precisely because of this, fresh efforts have been made in recent years to restore a new meaningful and satisfactory community life. It is in this context that the "basic communities" have emerged at the base or grass-roots level and they are the fundamental units of the new communal life.<sup>3</sup>

We may broadly categorize the many new forms of community life as follows: (1) Communities which negate social values and shun social institutions, e.g., hippie communes. Generally, they seek profound human relationships rather than material prosperity. Meditation and drugs are frequently regarded as the appropriate means to escape from the materialistic world and to discover the divine in the human heart or to attain an experience of cosmic union. (2) Communities which simply live as parallel or counter-institutions crystallizing counter-cultural values. (3) Communities with revolutionary goals, which serve the movements aiming at overthrowing the social structures. (4) Communities which work as dynamic change units within given structures, e.g., the charismatic renewal groups within the Church. (5) Living communes with limited goals, such as personal growth, spiritual enlightenment, etc., and which are not concerned with structures or societal critique, e.g., the Bhagwan communes.

### *Basic Communities in the Church*

In the life of the Church, too, history records a variety of new religious movements right from the early centuries.<sup>4</sup> Usually the religious renewal movements arise when the life of the Church has been weakened either by socio-cultural changes or by changes within the Church itself. They are the instinctive responses of Christians to restore the vitality of Christian living. The renewal movements generally lead to the formation of new communities. Every age produces the kind of structures that best meet man's various fundamental needs. The emergence of the basic communities is an attempt to restore the values of community living.

### *Inadequacy of the Parish Community Structure*

Communion (*koinonia*) among the members is one of the essen-

3. Cf. T. GRESH, (ed.), *Readings on Basic Christian Communities in the Church*, Manila 1977; *Concilium* n. 161 (1983/1).

4. Cf. C.M. OLSEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-34.

tial characteristics of the Church. In the first centuries of Christianity, there were only domestic communities of 20 to 60 Christians. But during the later centuries, the territorial parish came to be considered as the basic unit of the ecclesial society. Today, however, parishes have become too removed from the life of the average man, too sacralized, too clerical and too vast. Some parishes are mere organizational units, and in some cases they may be just cogs in the machine of diocesan administration. There is in them little scope for active participation, for spontaneity and for the co-responsibility of a community of brothers and sisters in faith and charity. Many urban parishes have become service institutions of liturgical and sacramental goods without any personal contact.

The renewal movements in the Church that have been active since the start of the 20th century, namely, the laity movement, particularly related to Catholic Action, the liturgical and the biblical movements and the theological renewal of ecclesiology have directly influenced the birth of the new grass-roots groups in the Church. Besides, the discovery of the values of married life, the experiences of the priest-workers, a new theology of terrestrial realities, the Better World Movement, etc., have paved the way for the emergence of new forms of community. The emphasis of Vatican II on the nature of the Church, describing it as the people of God, has directly created among Christians an awareness of shared responsibility and active participation in the functioning of the Church.

### *Christian Community and the Sacred Scriptures*

It is not necessary here to elaborate in detail how God works his plan for man in and through a faithful community. There are many works on this theme.<sup>5</sup> In the Sacred Scriptures, we can trace how from the call of Abraham to the sending of the Son and the outpouring of His Spirit, the top priority in the heart of God is to save the world and transform human society. He does this through the medium of a community that remains faithful to the Covenant and lives its human venture in communion with him and one another. "This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus" (GS 34). The early Christian communities were communities of faith, of unity of heart and mind, of mutual unselfish

5. Cf J. HAMER, *The Church as Communion*, London 1964; A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, New York 1974; G. PANIKULAM, *Koinonia in the New Testament*, Rome 1979; J.L. SEGUNDO, *The Community Called Church*, Dublin 1980.

service. They celebrated their liturgical thanksgiving in the "breaking of the bread". They were animated by the Word of God and the Spirit of Jesus who had proclaimed the Gospel message with courage and tried to conquer evil by simply doing good.

### *Basic Communities: Terminology and Concept*

The basic communities in the Church are known by several names, such as Basic Christian Communities, Basic Ecclesial Communities, Grass-roots Communities, Living Communities, Popular Communities, Basic Human Communities, and so on. All these names substantially convey the same reality. In our Indian context, because of the religious pluralism and to avoid a sense of alienation from other religions, it would be better to call them simply Basic Communities.

The term "basic" sociologically means popular, grass-roots, close to the people, the primary level of the society, etc. Theologically it means the fundamental Christian group in which the Church is truly a salvific event for the real, specific people, identifiable here and now. In a strategic sense, every institution has a vital need to create a network at the grass-roots level in order to be constantly in touch with the ever changing life-process. The size of a BCC is such that every one in it knows each other, the members relate with one another personally, and feel "at home" in the group.

We could, therefore, describe the BCCs as the groups of believers in Jesus Christ and his teaching, wherein there is an intense life of faith, mutual acceptance, understanding, love, community proclamation of the Word of God, sharing of the faith-experiences and celebration of the sacraments, specially the Eucharist. The Medellin and Puebla documents have rich and profound reflections on the reality of the BCCs. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (n. 58) also recognizes the ecclesial reality of the BCCs. Stephen B. Clark, author of a best seller, *Building Christian Communities*, says: "A Basic Christian Community is an environment of Christians which can provide for the basic needs of its members to live the Christian life."<sup>6</sup> To live a Christian life one needs a Christian environment. In the Christian growth the environmental factors are more basic than the institutional ones. Such an environment is found when individuals within

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6. S.B. CLARK, *Building Christian Communities*, Indiana 1978, p. 70. First printed in 1972, this book had by 1978 gone into the 8th printing.

a group interrelate or interact among themselves informally with some kind of stability. When a society as a whole does not accept Christianity, then it is all the more necessary to create Christian communities affording a Christian environment in which to live. The community type of environment is warm, strong and effective.

### *Forms of Community-Living in India*

The BCCs cannot be the same in all cultures, because though people are basically the same, each culture is unique and different. In the Indian context, it is generally said that Indians are less community-oriented and more individualistic in their philosophy, spirituality and social life. This could be true to some extent, and perhaps due to the influence of the predominant non-dualistic *advaita* philosophy and spirituality, which hold the oneness of all life. Yet we have ample evidence that in India there is a significant community consciousness based on the age-old joint-family, the village community, the tribal solidarity, the religious community and the caste system. Unfortunately, not much research has been done with regard to the dynamics of the community consciousness at work in the different forms of community living in India.

The BCCs of the type common in Latin America and Europe are non-existent in India and it is not desirable to transplant them as such. It is my conviction that once we are genuinely aware of the essential nature of the Church as communion and the community dynamics of Indian culture and society, typical Indian BCCs will emerge by themselves in course of time. Already some forms of basic Christian community living have emerged in different parts of India. If we read the signs of the times correctly, various active groups such as the ashram communities, the liberation groups, the Charismatic groups, other prayer groups, dialogue groups, etc., which are emerging in India, show clearly the trend towards a realization of the essential nature of the Church as communion.

### *Inculturation in India*

The Christian message is lived in India for the last nineteen centuries, yet its religious impact on India has not been significant. While searching for the reasons why Christianity appears foreign to the Indians, one point at least is obvious: the Church overlooked the need of inculturation because of an inadequate understanding of

culture and the world religions. In other words, though the Church had successfully assimilated the Roman structures, Greek philosophy and several ascetic movements, it failed to assimilate the Indian spirituality and Indian religious values. After Vatican II, however, the Church in India has become more aware of this need to inculturate itself in the local cultures. Several decisions have been taken at various levels to express the Christian message in Indian religious-cultural forms and assimilate the Indian way of life. But the concrete results of these decisions have fallen far short of reasonable expectations.

One of the main reasons for the failure of the recent inculturation efforts lies in the fact that the decisions are made and directions are given from above. They have mostly been initiatives of a few experts. There is little or no participation of the common believers who encounter daily the realities of Indian life. The inculturation process has not become a people's concern; and the attempts at speeding up the inculturation process have only occasioned tensions, divisions and rivalry in the Indian Church.

Given freedom and creativity, the living grass-roots communities can inculturate the Gospel values in their respective cultural context. It is in these communities that personal and active participation, an inculturated liturgy, spirituality, theology and new ministries should emerge. It is they who should help in realizing the essential nature of the Church as the people of God. Therefore the building up of grass-roots communities, or BCCs, is the appropriate pastoral option to be made in India today. It is such communities which incarnated the Latin American Church among its own poor people, from where the liberation theology and people power have emerged. About ten years ago, the African bishops, too, made an option to build up the BCCs in their dioceses in order to inculturate the Church in the African culture. As far as we are informed, their option has met with significant success. It is high time that the Indian Church too seriously strives after and facilitates the emergence of the BCCs in India, taking into account from the very start the natural and anthropological resources it has in its heritage.

### *The BCCs as the Ideal Place for Inculturation*

The following are the main reasons why the BCCs are an ideal place for inculturation:

First, we accept that the mystery of Christ through his incarnation, life, death and resurrection is the principle of inculturation and the model for encounter between God's message and every local culture in the world. The BCCs are a genuine place for such an encounter, because their members accept, reflect on, assimilate and live the Incarnate Word in their actual local cultures and make God's message meaningful and heard in the actual language of the people.

Second, the Church is Church only in so far as it exists and functions as a community incarnated in a particular culture. There is no Church if it is not localized, concretized and visible as a community. The BCCs in fact are the most local incarnations of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The potential of the BCCs to incarnate the universal Church in the local socio-religious milieu of the people is put in sharp evidence by several Episcopal Conferences.<sup>7</sup> It is here that every aspect of ecclesial life is lived in intensity with the maximum homogeneity and the minimum room for polarization.

Third, the BCCs inspire and create new forms of religious life and spirituality. Many members of religious orders are actively involved in the BCCs. This is because in the BCCs they find authentic community life which they themselves have been seeking to live when joining the religious order. We must remember that various religious orders, as also Christianity itself, began with small groups.

Fourth, the BCCs are a means to institutional renewal. The BCCs are complementary to the existing juridical parish communities. It is hoped that in future a parish could have several BCCs, the main role of the parish being that of coordinating, inspiring and training.

Fifth, the BCCs call for the renewal and restructuring of the ministries in the Church. In keeping with the new image of the Church as communion, every member shares in the pastoral concern of the Church according to each one's charism of the Spirit. The priestly ministry is only one, though privileged, expression of the total pastoral action. In places where there are too few priests, the BCCs are a fertile ground for new ministries.

Sixth, the BCCs are places for ecumenical encounter and dialogue. The ecumenical and dialogue movements and their resolutions at various secretariate and commission levels have to be integrated finally at the level of interpersonal relationships, common prayer, celebration, joint pursuit of justice and peace, and a living

7. Cf. J. Prasad PINTO, op. cit., pp. 169-177.



search for a specifically Christian way of life. The BCCs provide an existential framework for these resolutions, minimising divisions and augmenting the hopes of unity.

Seventh, the BCCs are places for experimentation. Small primary groups are extremely sensitive and quick to react to life with all its possibilities and unforeseen situations. They are the places where the members can face new challenges, take risks of making mistakes and be in a better position to rectify them. It is in basic communities that new kinds of prayer, liturgical symbols, etc., make their appearance.

Eighth, in India there is also a need to realize a new type of holiness. "A holy person is not just an ascetic, not just the faithful observer of divine and ecclesiastical dispositions, not just the person who explored and internalized the sacrosanct mystery of God and God's human appearance in Jesus. All that retains its perennial value, which is irreplaceable. But the BCCs are creating conditions for another kind of holiness, that of the militant."<sup>8</sup> A holy person is also prepared to fight against all types of oppression and stands for the creation of a just human society. The BCCs manifest this type of holiness in their virtues of class solidarity, participation in community decisions, mutual aid, criticism of abuses of power, etc.

By depicting the positive side of the BCCs, we do not mean that they are a panacea for all ills and defects in the Church and society. The BCCs are made up of believers, who are at the same time weak and limited. Evidently, the BCCs are liable to err, deviate and regress. Rivalries, conflicts and divisions could end up in the dissolution of the BCCs themselves. Obviously, the BCCs need larger communities and societies for their inspiration, correction and support. They are linked to the larger religious and social systems in innumerable ways. On their part the BCCs, acting as leaven in the dough, could indeed facilitate the encounter of the whole system of organization with the Gospel.

If we could build up truly dialogical, participative and responsible basic or grass-roots communities, we need not go on searching for new formulas or vehicles of inculturation. The genuine Christian living community itself is the formula and the end of inculturation.

### *How to Build the Basic Communities*

There is no single clear blueprint to build the BCCs. Since the

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8. L. BOFF, "Theological Characteristics of a Grass-roots Church", in S. TORRES, and J. EAGLESON (eds), *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities*, New York 1981, p. 142.

concrete socio-cultural factors differ from place to place, it is impossible to give a perfect model, valid for all concrete situations. In recent years, many books and articles are published, which outline different approaches. Here we could give just a couple of general hints.

Building the BCCs is a dynamic process to be lived and undergone, rather than a programme to be taught and explained. The deeper implications of community life will be discovered by the people themselves as they actually live out their community life. The relationship among the members and their faith-experience as a community is primary, while the structures and their activities are secondary. These only facilitate and sustain the relationships. Awareness of the absence or the low level of community life in the Indian Church is, perhaps, of utmost importance before we take any step in forming the BCCs. Next, it is essential to be acquainted with the nature and dynamics of a group and a Christian community. The Acts of the Apostles give us a model: "They remained faithful to the brotherhood—the breaking of the bread—and to communal prayer" (Acts 2:42). The BCCs have to be built *with* the people and *not for* the people. The role of an animator cannot be minimized but the participation of all the members in all the aspects of community life should be consistently observed.

Every locality has many types of groups, such as those based on kinship, neighbourhood, profession, common interest, common ideals etc. Some of these could be gainfully transformed into basic communities. In the formation-process of the BCCs, it is important that all members get to know one another and come to relate among themselves at a deep interpersonal level during their weekly or fortnightly meetings. Conscientization to the needs of the members, and to those of society, is important. Common prayers, liturgical celebrations, reflections on Scriptural passages in concrete life situations, should lead to commitment and praxis. At regular intervals the BCC will must evaluate its common life, its objectives and their realization, its relationship to the larger community, etc. The evaluation leads to a renewal of the community life and a firmer commitments to its goals.

All the talk about BCCs should not lead us to get another ideology. The BCCs movement is essentially a spirituality, the way we live the Gospel with other people. It is a search for communion at all levels and a search for reconciliation.

# Correspondence

## The Pope's Visit

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the thought-provoking reflections on the papal visit. I am sure that all of us have profited much from your comments. May I add a few.

You have said that the element of pomp was generally kept within reasonable limits. But it appears that it was so only in the North. As a non-Christian journalist put it, never in the history of Kerala has there been anything like this in terms of splendour and extravaganza. Last August the Government of Kerala decided not to have any official celebration of the Onam Festival because of the floods that had ravaged and impoverished the state. Just a few months later the Catholics of the state went wild with frenzied celebrations to welcome the Pope. On the other hand, it is admirable to see how much generosity and enthusiasm the papal visit elicited. One is reminded of John 12:3. The papal visit did result in an outflow of hidden wealth, talents and energy. Above all, of love.

I wouldn't quite go along with the comment on the incongruity of bullet proof cars. When Pope Paul VI visited India "the political dimensions of the pope's figure" were the same. What has dramatically changed in the last two decades is the rise in international terrorism and the consequent insecurity of every important person. Is it not the host country that insists on so much security? In any case, it was wonderful to see that the pope, on many occasions, dismantled such barriers between him and the people.

I think that a little more reflection on the challenges the pope has placed before us through his visit would be in order. Bending his knees before Gandhiji's samadhi and bowing before Mother Teresa made the pope say "I may be the pope, but you are greater than I am." His informality during the religious rites calls on us to break the fetters of rubricism. His preferential option for the handicapped and the sick challenges our smugness. His warmth and friendliness, his ability to treat rich and poor, children and adults, Christians and non-Christians alike, invites us to a more humane way of dealing with others. His evident admiration for things Indian bids us to shed our religious superiority complex.

St Luke's Church  
New Delhi-110024.

Yours sincerely,  
Fr George KUREETHRA

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your perceptive editorial comments on the visit of the Pope to India and for the excellent material presented in the April issue of Vidyajyoti. I would like, however, to point out a technical error. The Holy Father was not invited by the Government of India as the Head of the tiny Vatican State (p. 170), but as the incumbent of the Holy See with which alone the Government has diplomatic relations.

V. HUNTER

# Book Reviews

## Religious History

**How to Read Church History. Vol. 1: From the beginnings to the fifteenth century.** By Jean COMBY. London, SCM Press Ltd., 1985, Pp. 195. £ 6.50.

The SCM Press and John Bowden deserve many thanks for giving us the English version of this fine French book. The approach is spelt out in the very beginning where we are told that this book is "A Guide to steer you through Church History" (p. 1). This first volume covers the period up to 1500 AD. I am not going to attempt to review the whole content of the book. There are ten chapters, the first six on the early centuries, the last four on the Middle Ages up to the middle of the fifteenth century. A fine blend of a text based on the latest research in Church history with excerpts from original sources numbered so as to illustrate the topics discussed in the various chapters, together with maps and drawings, help one to get a good feel and overview of the themes discussed. At the end of each chapter there are suggestions for further reading for the student who wants to go into the matter more deeply. The book ends with a series of chronological tables that situate events and people in their social, political, religious and literary context.

I recommend the book not only for the libraries of theologates but for the bookshelves of bishops and parish priests, houses of formation and parish libraries. Church history is unfortunately, in our country, a "blank" subject to many students and clergy. A book like this one can give a broader knowledge of the matter. This may help to nuance some of the sweeping statements that one finds even in theological articles which sometimes reject things their authors know little about. It may also be of service to modern apologetics. So many of the anti-Christian pamphlets, articles and books that appeared on the occasion of the Pope's visit to India were based on outdated and prejudiced "histories" written by anti-Catholic authors in the

British Raj days. Those books still adorn the shelves of our university libraries. A fine apostolic venture might be to gift one copy of Comby to a local college or university.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**Antioch and Rome. New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity.** By Raymond E. BROWN and John P. MEIER. London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1983. Pp. xii-242. £ 5.95.

This book may be called a "detective story" in scholarly history. It is an attempt to trace the early history of the Christian communities at Antioch and Rome. The aim is to get at the theological complexion, so to speak, of those two very early Christian centres. What the authors want to bring to light is that there was more than one approach to the mission to the gentiles in the early Church. A too exclusively Pauline view is still surviving in the popular mind. By that they mean that the commonly accepted view is that Paul's approach, with its rejection of circumcision and the Mosaic Law, is taken as the approach to the mission. A careful reading of Acts itself reveals that such a view has to be nuanced. We find, in fact, four main positions, with a lot of blending, *vis-à-vis* the mission in the gentiles.

What this work reveals is that Jewish Christianity was a very prevalent trend at both Antioch and Rome, and that Paul's view of the Law and circumcision was far from being the only or even the dominant view in these early Christian centres. To establish their thesis the authors engage in the reconstruction of the theology of these centres by using some materials that are certain and some that are possible. In other words, the thesis stands on the strength of their hypotheses. I do not wish by this to convey the impression that the work is purely speculative reconstruction of the early history of the Christian community at Antioch and Rome. The picture painted by Meier and Brown is a plausible one. It is just that as the authors themselves

realize, "some parts of our hypotheses are less verifiable than others" (ix). This honest approach invites other scholars to a dialogue.

Stated simply, the thesis is that the Jewish Christianity of Peter had a greater influence both at Antioch and at Rome than the Christianity of Paul, and that Peter stands as a kind of mid-figure between Paul and James. To establish the thesis they trace the "genealogy" of the communities from the available literary sources. Meier does this for Antioch, Brown for Rome. Each one comes with three "generations". In Antioch, the first generation of Christians is dated AD 40-70 and found in *Galatians 2* and *Acts 11-15*. The second, 70-100, is witnessed to in the Gospel of *Matthew*. The third, after 100 AD, is seen in the *Letters of Ignatius* and in the *Didache*. Brown starts his section with the beginnings of the Christian Church in Rome and takes his document for the first generation Paul's letter to the *Romans*, dated about 58 AD. He recognizes this to be towards the end of the first generation of that Church. The second generation, 65-95 AD, is traced in *1 Peter* and *Hebrews*. The third, from 96 AD, in *1 Clement*.

In a supplementary chapter (X, pp. 184-210), Brown notes the additions to our knowledge of early Roman Christianity which may be found in Paul's letters to the *Philippians*, in *Ephesians*, in *Mark*, in *Ignatius to the Romans*, in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, in the legends about Peter and Simon Magus at Rome, and in *2 Peter*.

The book makes interesting and fascinating reading. I recommend it.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**Muslims in China. A Study in Cultural Confrontation.** By Raphael ISRAELI, *New Delhi, Ambika Publications*, 1980. (Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies. Monogr. Series no. 29.) Pp. x-272, Rs. 95.

In this original work which embraces a wide and yet little known area of research, the author deals first with the presence of Muslims in China from the angle of the sociological question of majority-minority relations. The relations between the Muslim and Chinese populations are cast on this background. The second part of the work analyses the eighteenth and nineteenth century developments in China which led to the rise of the Muslim rebellion.

Dr R. Israeli of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, is one of the very restricted number of scholars who unite a knowledge of Arabic and classical Islam with a thorough awareness of Chinese culture. Hence the present work is "a source of illumination upon this little known but fascinating outpost of the great family of Islam" (C.E. Bosworth). Reading this work from the comparable angle of the Muslim minority status in the Republic of India adds a further dimension of interest.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

### Biography

**Muhammad. His Life Based on the Earliest Sources.** By Martin LINGS. *New Delhi, Vikas Publ. House / London, The Islamic Texts Society*, 1983. viii-359, Cloth Rs 195 (in India only).

The publication in India of this comprehensive biography of the Prophet of Islam, written by a Muslim believer and widely acclaimed scholar, is a noteworthy event. The account is wholly based on the Quran, the famous collections of Hadith (Traditions) and on the earliest relevant biographical and historical works. The author has woven into the exquisitely well-narrated story countless quotations from these sources, thus making the reader familiar with the early sources themselves. He has drawn a detailed and vivid portrait of Muhammad. The, for comparable present-day Indian standards, very fine production of the book (paper printing, binding) matches the quality of its content. Some parts of the book, especially chapter 81 on certain mystical aspects of the Quran's and Muhammad's teaching and the subsequent final chapters including the depiction of the Prophet's death, are moving and illuminating.

At the same time, Lings' account is not a critical one. Since the work addresses itself to an educated audience, and not only to Muslim believers but to a wider circle, one wonders whether his indiscriminate reliance on all available historical material without any shade of criticism serves his cause. Lings does not apply any critical discernment in the selection of incidents and there is a lack of a distinct centering on the truly significant and lasting elements of the Prophet's life and teaching. Commenting on this fact the Indian Muslim

scholar Syed Vahiduddin submits that "a work which is dedicated to his (i.e. the Prophet's) life should serve as invitation (da'wa) and should not include matter which is no part of Islamic creed and which may eclipse the central issues and distract the attention of the reader from them to facts which are not relevant and which have only a marginal significance" (*Islam and the Modern Age*, XV (1984), p. 131).

By relegating aspects which would seem to deserve most attention to the background and by giving at the same time prominence to incidents of dubious authenticity, Lings does not help the reader in grasping the centrally relevant aspects of the Prophet's life and message. Syed Vahiduddin's verdict therefore strikes us as just: "The Prophet emerges from his biography as a brilliant strategist, as an astute statesman, as a courageous leader of men who led his people to victory in spite of heavy odds. In other words, he appears as a hero of history and yet as a hero of which military geniuses are made, as a builder of a state and as one who laid the foundation of a vast empire it was to be. Unfortunately these qualities alone do not make a prophetic figure, a man in communion with God, a man who does not need any miracles to prop up his claim; one who stands in the full light of history as a challenge to history" (*ibid.*, p. 128).

We would recommend to read Martin Lings' substantial and beautifully written work in conjunction with Kenneth Cragg's reflective book *Muhammad and the Christian* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd / Maryknoll Orbis, 1984; reviewed in *Vidyajyoti* XLIX (1985) pp. 138-41).

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Martin Luther, Prophet to the Church Catholic. By James ATKINSON. Exeter, The Paternoster Press/Grand Rapids. W.E. Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. vi-226. 6.80 pb.

May I start this review by borrowing the words with which Y. Congar began his review of a similar French book: "What to say about this beautiful book . . . ?" Reading Prof. Atkinson's book has been an experience and it is not easy to put it into words. If you read the book you will know what I mean. The book is an expansion of the lectures that the author gave in 1981. Its thesis is that the message of Luther will

not find its fullness until it takes its place in the Catholic Church. Martin Luther never wanted to leave the Church in which he had been baptised and in which he had embraced the calling of a friar. I think that this needs to be emphasised and borne in mind. To his dying day Luther believed in the real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. According to Atkinson, Luther would not have countenanced a "Lutheran" Church. Consequently, a "confessional" understanding of Luther is as mistaken as is the Roman misunderstanding of him.

The story of the Roman Catholic perspective on Luther is dealt with in the first part of the book. The author divides the reactions to Luther into two broad periods. The first dates from 1517 to 1939 and this he calls the "devaluation of Luther." This was the period of bitter hostility and very destructive criticism. "For over four and a half centuries . . . Roman Catholicism took an unrelenting line of vicious invective and vile abuse against Luther's person, while virtually disregarding his vital and vivid religious experience, his commanding and irrefutable biblical theology, and his consuming concern to reform the Church according to the teaching and purpose of its founder Jesus Christ" (p. 3). The second period goes from 1939 to 1983, and Atkinson sees it as a "revaluation of Luther" when Catholic scholars look upon the reformer with respect and interest. Part I of the book is then a historical overview of the Catholic reaction to Luther. It is interesting (and saddening) and adequately complete. A big lacuna for me, however, is the oversight of the work of Jared Wick, S.J., perhaps the most outstanding Luther scholar in the English-speaking Catholic world today. Wick's work would add even more strength to the argument of the book.

In Part II Prof. Atkinson addresses himself to Luther's significance for the whole Church. In this section he deals with those topics that the name Martin Luther easily evokes, namely, his fundamental religious experience, the general priesthood of the believers, justification by faith, the authority of the Bible, the doctrine of Christ and of the Church. This is preceded by chapters on Luther as Reformer and Prophet and on what the Catholic Luther has to say to confessional Lutheranism.

The book has a very clear ecumenical thrust. The author believes that the

Second Vatican Council is a deep event of the Spirit. Throughout the book it is obvious that the Council teaching has touched a deep chord in the author. He writes of Luther with warmth, a sure knowledge, and evident admiration. Luther is for him a friend that he loves. He wants that friend to be understood. The book is a witness of the author's own very vibrant evangelical faith. The many quotations from Luther's own words give a cogency to his main thesis that Luther was a deeply religious man, a Prophet to the Church Catholic.

I dare say that this book would help many Catholic pastors to add some life to their preaching. Atkinson, like Luther, is a man whose thought has passed through his heart. Ultimately, only such a heart-thought will touch other hearts.

One little quibble that my Jesuit heart has with the author is his statement that the Jesuits imprisoned Galileo for his Copernican views (p. 181). Consulting Brodrick's *Robert Bellarmine, Saint and Scholar* will show that this view has to be nuanced. Some Jesuits may have been rejecting, but some also supported Galileo; and, as far as I know, the Jesuits were not jailers! This does not mar a fine book that deserves a wide reading and re-reading.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

## Spirituality

**By Heart. A Lifetime Companion.** Selected and edited by John BOWDEN, London, SCM. 1984. Pp. viii-120. £ 2.95.

With all the changes in liturgy and piety, many current prayer forms and hymns are superficial and probably will not stand the test of time. In old age men and women often find that ancient prayer forms, classical prayers and religious poetry nourish their prayer life. Spontaneous prayer needs so often to be supplemented by the time-tested great prayers and religious poetry, as we are unable to express ourselves our deeper sentiments.

Over the years John Bowden has gathered such a collection of prayers and now arranged them according to their literary type, namely: Psalms, Collects, Prayers, Hymns and Poems, Benedictions and Vision. (There is an index of the opening words). Memorized, these

prayers could accompany a person until death. The collection could be deeply treasured by many mature people who wish to pray by means of diverse prayer formulas and do not just rely on a few simple prayers. This fine book of prayers could be a very welcome gift to an older person who has a good grasp of English and European culture, who will derive an added joy from the literary quality of the prayers and poetry. Younger people may also be surprised to find that they too are led to prayer and discover in these ancient and modern prayers the expression of their own religious depths. They may be led, like the editor, to make a prayer book for themselves which will accompany them to old age and be, after years of familiarity, resonant with much meaning and devotion.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**The Path of the Mystic.** By Peter SPINK London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983. Pp. 85. £ 2.95.

Peter Spink is a Canon of Coventry Cathedral, and founder of a teaching Order, "The Omega Order". The principles by which this Order operates are outlined in his book. *Spiritual Man in a New Age* (DLT, 1985).

Our world today is characterised by a great search for guidelines that will give a clear sense of direction. This search transcends all the old barriers created by belief-patterns and thought-forms. The old and familiar landmarks provided by external restraints and authorities are found to be insufficient. People experience an intense desire to discover and relate to objective reality. The mystical path explored in this book is concerned with this reality. It leads to experimental wisdom. Those who enter on it can be called pilgrims or mystics or contemplatives. They are the watchmen in any society. "They alone occupy a vantage point between and above separated communal interests."

The primary task of the spiritual pilgrim is the discovery of one's own real identity. One must discover a place of pure self-consciousness at the centre of one's own being. Surely the emergence of this picture will present a threat to the ego or false self. The "usurper" cannot continue his rule. The path of pilgrimage is one of laying down one's life in order to find it—a dying in order that

life may come to birth. This is perfectly expressed in the life and death of Jesus. One has no real or permanent identity until one finds one's true self through the putting to death of the ego. This is historically demonstrated in Jesus, but is unacceptable to human vanity. St Paul calls it "the offence of the Cross". The straight path is revealed through the discovery of true self-consciousness. This is the new birth without which one cannot enter the kingdom of God. "Nowhere is this self-realization more powerfully expressed than in the great I AM sayings of Jesus recorded in St John's Gospel . . . It is this I AM which is the Way" (47).

Each of the seven brief chapters of the book is followed by meditational exercises and the exploration of select Scripture passages which are meant to help the reader to develop a true awareness of God within, and an ability to relate to others through faith, and a capacity to see meaning and purpose in the world of which one is a part.

C.M. CHERIAN, S.J.

*Prayers from a Troubled Heart.* By George APPLETON. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983. Pp. ix-69. £ 1.75.

Bishop Appleton is the author of a few well-known books of prayer. In the Preface to the present volume, he says that he is over 80 years of age, and that the prayers here "are very personal and real, sometimes coming from the temptations facing my own spirit, sometimes arising when people in my pastoral care have taken me into their confidence, longing for deeper faith in God and assurance of his never-failing love." A number of friends had asked him if he could produce a little book of prayers which could be used in moments of anxiety, loneliness, depression, when God seems disconcertingly hidden and silent.

Each prayer is linked with a verse of Scripture. Bishop Appleton thinks that it may well be that the Scripture text is more important than his prayers. What the troubled heart needs most is to create that quietness and trust where the Spirit of God can speak to it and lead it forth beside the waters of comfort. We all need the spirit of the boy Samuel who prayed: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

C.M. CHERIAN, S.J.

*The Bridge is Love. An Anthology of Hope.* Collected by Elizabeth BAKER. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981. Pp. 180. £ 5.95.

This is an anthology of insights and inspirations culled from poets, musicians, artists, sculptors, and ordinary people in their moments of creativity. The inspirational passages cited are arranged under the following headings: Creation, Wonder, Longing, Loving, Living, Laughter and Joy, Looking and Listening, the Artist, The Dancer, The Sculptor, The Musician, The Poet, Praying, Dreaming, Dying.

The aim of the passages is to create awareness—"awareness of that other dimension, that mystery which makes the living of every day infinitely exciting and worthwhile" (Preface). Such an awareness calls for "receptiveness to that which can really only be seen or heard or understood in the still, silent centre of our souls, but which is conveyed by all the sights and sounds, the joys and sorrows of our daily living." This awareness creates hope even in the darkest days of suffering and anxiety, and "the bridge to it is love, the bridge of communication between people, the bridge of communication supremely between the Creator and his creation."

The ruling idea of the anthology is suggested by a citation from Edward Carpenter given on the very first page: "Among the words of this book glides eluding that other Word which reveals their significance; wonderful, eternal—when these words perish and fall apart from each other that Word shall not perish but return thither whence it sprang" (*Towards Democracy*).

C.M. CHERIAN, S.J.

*Psalms/Now.* By Leslie F. BRANDT. Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 1983. Pp. 214. Rs 20.

L. F. Brandt is the author of several devotional books—*Epistles/Now*, *Jesus/Now*, *Great God. Here I Am*, etc. In *Psalms/Now* he has "rewritten" all 150 Psalms of the Old Testament. In his use of the Psalms through the years he found that they helped him to articulate his own feelings and to verbalize his own prayers as a struggling believer. This gave him the idea of "rewriting" the Psalms. The new Psalms express what the original Psalms said to the author.



and about him. He hopes that, in their new form, they may reveal to readers "something about themselves and give them a means of expressing their actual feelings in their conversations with God" (Preface). They can be thought of as expressing "what the Psalmist might be saying if he were living in the twentieth century." Thus these Psalms have become prayers of the Christians on this side of the Easter event. Still the Christ name is not used. At the same time the new Psalms retain something of the honesty and humanity of the original psalm-writers in their daily conflicts. My impression is that they are a successful transposition and transformation of the old Psalms. They have a ring of authenticity, and retain much of the inspiration of the original Psalms.

C.M. CHERIAN, S.J.

**Jesus, Hope Drawing Near, Reflections on the Gospels for the C-Cycle.** By Joseph G. DONDER. *Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books/Melbourne, Dove Communications*, 1985. Pp. viii-264. \$ 10.95.

This sixth set of the author's "Reflections" on the Gospels centers on the C-cycle of the Lectionary. We find here again the poetic, appealing, and direct style of the previous volumes. These "reflections" contain rich considerations both for personal reflection and for prayer and should prove a rich source of thought for prayer in the ministry and for homilies. The reflections are not meant to be reproduced materially, but they certainly will be a source of inspiration for each one's own need. In the introductory consideration the author gives a telling example of how his ideas can become a source of inspiration which one will easily adapt to one's own needs and circumstances. In connection with the title of the volume it is the theme of "Jesus, Hope Drawing Near" which is emphasized most frequently. As in the previous sets of reflections, the typographical presentation should prove a great help for fixing the attention.

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

### Towards Justice

**Proclaiming Justice and Peace. Documents from John XXIII to John Paul II.** Edited by Michael WALSH and Brian DAVIES. Bangalore, TPI, 1985. Pp. xxii-345.

The TPI has made available a very valuable set of Catholic documents for

sale only in India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. They were originally published by Collins.

The following documents are included: *Mater et Magistra, Pacem in Terris, Gaudium et Spes, Populorum Progressio, Octagesima Adveniens, Justice in the World, Evangelii Nuntiandi, Redemptor Hominis, Dives in Misericordia and Laborem Exercens*. There is a general introduction which surveys the social teaching of the Church over nearly 100 years and situates each document within this evolutionary process and highlights characteristics of the teaching of each document. Walsh also assesses the value of this body of the Church's social teaching.

Each document is introduced and summarized. There is a useful subject index for the whole volume. *Octagesima Adveniens* is consistently misspelled *Octagesimo Adveniens*. In the copy sent for review at times the print is slightly indistinct.

This collection will be valuable in seminaries, houses of formation, reference sections of libraries and good parish libraries. We are grateful to the TPI.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Broken Bread and Broken Bodies, The Lord's Supper and World Hunger.** By Joseph A. GRASSI. *Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1985. x-116. \$ 6.95.

As the author himself states in the preface of this book, "the purpose of this book is to point out how a deep understanding of and participation in the Eucharist can mobilize effective individual and community action to start a great miracle of sharing that will lead to the end of hunger" (x). The book is divided into two parts. Part I which is entitled "The Eucharist and Radical Discipleship" is a survey of the social, economic, political and religious situation during the time of Jesus. As its title shows, it develops the relation between the Eucharist and discipleship. "The Eucharist is a solemn pledge or covenant to be a disciple of Jesus, to imitate his life style" (3). Jesus was at the service of the poor, the hungry and the oppressed. The author concludes that "Jesus was a religious, social and political messiah" (24) and that "through radical discipleship to Jesus the exploitative forces can be overcome" (57). This can

(continued on p. 249)

# Vidyajyoti

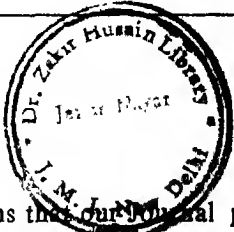
## JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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### Editorial



This is the third time in the last six months that our Journal presents a reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity. In December last year this mystery was presented as a model to understand the Church. In January this year Fr T. Dabre expressed the view that certain modern theological reformulations of the mystery, including the one attempted by K. Rahner, were deficient from the point of view of the traditional Christian faith. By contrast, in this issue the Augustinian Fr J. SCANLON presents the view that such modern authors express in a more acceptable way the authentic faith in Yahvism which is characteristic of the New Testament and of Jesus himself, and shows also how their approach makes dialogue with Islam not only possible but also an exciting venture. Some of our readers may think that to describe the Biblical Word/Wisdom and the Spirit as "eternal real possibilities in God" manifested in the reality of creation and history does not do justice to the Christian faith in the "three persons". Clearly, this theological reflection must continue in a context of dialogue, especially in India that has been justly described as "The Land of the Trinity." Even if the article we present here may appear theoretical and difficult, still the issue it discusses has profound implications for dialogue and our own spirituality. The author reminds us that the Christian Trinitarian confession should not be allowed to obscure the robust monotheism on which it is built.

Who is Jesus Christ for India? The answer to this question from the followers of the various Indian religions is an important factor in the total life of the Gospel in India, and a source for Christian theological reflection. This fact has often been commented upon in the

past, and already in 1970 M.M. Thomas published an important book, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (Bangalore CISRS, Madras CLS). Apart from the authors studied there, and other less known older writers, in recent times there have been new serious interpretations of Jesus from people of other faiths, notably from poets and painters. In 1969 the Sikh scholar Dr Gopal Singh published in English *The Man Who Never Died*: in 1971 K.P. Keshava Menon brought out his *Yeshu Devan* in Malayalam, and in 1982 Kannadasan gave us an important and long Tamil poem on the life of Christ, *Yesu Kaviyam*. We are happy to offer to our readers in this issue the presentation made by Fr Vincent FRANCIS of a new book, in Hindi, on the man Jesus, by the well-known Hindi literary critic Dr Raghuvamsha. We would be happy to publish in our Journal notices or reviews of similar significant new studies of Jesus Christ by followers of other faiths and ideologies, written in any of the many languages of India.

Fr Ignatius HIRUDAYAM comments on an article published last year in these pages and offers his own reflections on the Indian Eucharistic Prayer which has been the object of so much controversy in India, even when it has been highly praised in many quarters. He pleads with the C.B.C.I. Commission for Christian Life to present the prayer again to the general body of the Bishops' Conference for their approval and submission to Rome. Given that the number of Eucharistic prayers has been increased and that there are several African Eucharistic prayers in use (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1980, pp. 342-4), it would seem that Fr Hirudayam's plea is reasonable and that the Indian Church is called to new initiatives and courage in matters liturgical. Fr Samuel RAYAN's meditation offers perspectives that unfold for us the rich symbolism contained in the Eucharist we celebrate.

Finally, Fr Carlos DE MELO offers us a canonical study of the obligation Pastors have to offer masses for their people according to the new Code of Canon Law. His careful analysis will surely remind priests of their role as intercessors on behalf of their community and the people at large and recall for all of us that indeed "prayer is the soul of all apostolate."

(Please note that there was no June issue of the Journal.)

# Fidelity to Monotheism: Christianity and Islam

Rev. Michael J. SCANLON, O.S.A.\*

**I**N the past twenty years significant progress has been made in Islamic-Christian dialogue. For Catholicism this movement away from centuries of conflict was initiated by the Second Vatican Council in its official recognition of non-Christian religions *as religions*, with significant references of respect for Muslims.<sup>1</sup> Since the Council, Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have often spoken of the moral and spiritual values of Islam.<sup>2</sup> This new spirit of open dialogue toward mutual understanding must continue if religion is to contribute to a new world order more in accord with the 'universal human longing for peace and justice.' It is in this spirit that this paper on fidelity to monotheism is presented.

Successful interreligious dialogue has long proven the fecundity of finding a basic area of agreement for a point of departure. By now it is a commonplace of the wider ecumenical dialogue of our time to hear the claim that both Christianity and Islam are "monotheistic" religions, that both are heirs to the Biblical witness to the One and only One God. However, when one examines the literature one finds that even this seemingly basic agreement is in need of nuance. For some, the very notion of "monotheism" is ambiguous in terms of its religious, anthropological, and cultural consequences.<sup>3</sup> Among some Christians, undifferentiated monotheism evokes images of a starkly transcendent—even deist—notion of God. Among Muslims there is a general contention that the Christian doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity in fact deny monotheism. In response to this criticism I attempt in what follows to make a case

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1. *Nostra Aetate*, 3; *Lumen Gentium*, 16; *Ad Gentes*, 11.

2. Cf. T. MICHEL, "Christianity and Islam: Reflections on Recent Teachings of the Church," *Encounters: Documents for Muslim-Christian Understanding* 112 (1985).

3. Cf. Claude GEFRE and Jean-Pierre JOSSUA, eds, "Monotheism," *Concilium* 177, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark Ltd, 1985.

for the thesis that these doctrines are not merely compatible with monotheism but that they concretely explicate the monotheistic faith of Christianity.

### *Trinity and Incarnation*

Many Muslims have interpreted the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as explicit tritheism.<sup>4</sup> While the orthodox tradition of the Church has always rejected this interpretation, it cannot be denied that some Christian theologians have presented understandings of the Trinity that patently ground critical suspicions of tritheism. In the course of the development of this Trinitarian understanding of the Christian God some theologians—akin to Muslims in this regard—rejected “immanent” Trinitarianism (that God is eternally triune and not merely historically active in a triune way) in fidelity to the divine “monarchy.”<sup>5</sup> These theologians produced an understanding of the Trinity which became known as “modalism” (the eternally One God acting triunely in the history of salvation). Against these extreme positions the orthodox Christian tradition has always sought to formulate its Trinitarian understanding of God in terms of a “mean”—between the maximalism of tritheism on the right and the minimalism of modalism on the left. (By way of comparison, the doctrine of creation can also be understood as a mean between dualism on the right and pantheism on the left.<sup>6</sup>)

During the centuries subsequent to the Church’s definition of the doctrine of the Trinity at its first and second ecumenical councils (Nicea in 325 and Constantinople I in 381) basically orthodox Trinitarian theologies can be seen as evincing “tendencies” toward either one of the extreme positions. Thus one might observe that Eastern (Greek) Christian Trinitarianism shows a “tendency” toward crypto-tritheism, while Western (Latin) Christian Trinitarianism displays a crypto-modalist “tendency.”

As a Western Christian I am an heir of the latter “tendency”—a position which makes me theologically akin to the Muslim witness to monotheism! With the Jew who avers that there is only one God

4. In the Qur’an the Trinity is identified as the “Holy Family” (God, Mary, and Jesus). For Muslims, Trinity has traditionally meant “three gods.”

5. Sabellius is the famous illustration. To make his point he preferred a “patripassian” understanding of the Cross.

6. Cf. Langdon GILKRY, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, Garden City, Doubleday & Company, 1959.

and Yahweh is his name Christians explicitly concur. With the Muslim who avers that there is only one God and Allah is his name Christians explicitly concur. But the Christian, as Christian, also avers that there is only one God and his name is the Father of Jesus Christ and, through Christ in the Spirit, of all humanity.

In the Western theological tradition significant dissatisfaction with the "tri-personal" language of Trinitarianism has been registered since the time of Augustine. Before the Council of Nicea, Origen in the East had embraced a neo-Platonic schema on the relationship between God and the *logos* which seemingly protected the divinity of the latter but at the cost of rendering the *logos* a "second god" subordinated to the Father.<sup>7</sup> This Origenist vision can easily inspire a literal ditheism. In it there is no question about the eternal pre-existence of the divine *logos*—but what eternally pre-exists is a god somewhat less than God (the Father). The Nicene *homoousios* overcame this subordinationist ditheism in basic fidelity to New Testament monotheism. In the West, Tertullian developed the Latin Trinitarian vocabulary, but his uncritically materialist cast of mind led him to envision the *logos* as a "portion" of the substance of the Father.<sup>8</sup>

All later development of Trinitarianism in the West was inspired by Augustine. His remark on the "personal" Trinitarian vocabulary he inherited is famous. When faced with the issue of "Three" in God, Augustine felt that human speech had reached a limit, and, thus, "if we say three Persons, it is not so much to affirm something as to avoid saying nothing."<sup>9</sup> For Augustine God is not an object of human thought. Rather, God is the principle of self-conscious life. With his "psychological" approach to the doctrine of the Trinity the Triune God becomes the ground of human existence (the Father), human cognition (the Son), and human conation (the Holy Spirit). This Augustinian understanding of the Trinitarian God as the ground of human subjectivity resonates with much contemporary Catholic "transcendental" theology.<sup>10</sup>

Recent Trinitarian theology in the West illustrates the continuing

7. Cf. William RUSCH, ed., *The Trinitarian Controversy*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1980, pp. 13-17.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

9. *De Trinitate*, IX, 12, no. 17.

10. For a superb treatment of Augustinian Trinitarianism, cf. Charles COCHRANE, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, London, Oxford University Press, 1940, pp. 399-455.

influence of Augustine's "crypto-modalism."<sup>11</sup> But before I turn to a consideration of some contemporary systematic theologians a few observations on recent linguistic philosophy and biblical criticism are in order.

Among the key "turns" or "shifts" in contemporary theology one of the most fruitful has been "the linguistic turn."<sup>12</sup> Theologians familiar with developments in the philosophy of language have become aware of the pervasive linguisticity of human life.<sup>13</sup> Among others, Paul Ricoeur has alerted theologians to the special kind of language which is spontaneously employed by people in expressing specifically religious experiences.<sup>14</sup> In brief, religious language is fundamentally a symbolic, not conceptual, language. As multivalent mediations of meaning, symbols are peculiarly suited to express the finally ineffable referent of religious experience, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.<sup>15</sup> The perennial symbols of the Christian tradition testify to the power of the "analogical imagination" of people who perceive a divine epiphany in nature and/or in history.<sup>16</sup> If God is the Creator of the world, and if *omne agens agit simile sibi* ("every agent projects itself in its action"), then the world of space and time can reveal to the attuned hospitality of human openness intimations, adumbrations, traces, in a word, signs, of its divine Author. As these signs become effective in structuring the religious imagination of a people, a symbol system revelatory of a symbolic whole becomes the self-identification of a lasting religious tradition. While these symbols are specific enough to identify a religion as "one and the same" diachronically, as symbols they are elastic enough to beget an ongoing, dynamically re-creative synchronicity in the history of their transmission, somehow transcending the inevitable losses and discontinuities which describe temporal passage. As long as a religious tradition lives, as long as its religious symbols are able to illuminate the ever-changing totality of a people's lived experience, these symbols give an ultimate meaning to life, evoke conversion in the light of this

11. William HILL, *The Three Personed God*, Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1982, p. 62. Hill describes this "crypto-modalism" in Augustine as "latent" and "unintentional."

12. Cf. David TRACY, *A Blessed Rage for Order*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1975, p. 72 ff.

13. Cf. Susanne LANGER, *Philosophy in a New Key*, New York, The New American Library, 1942.

14. Cf. Paul RICOEUR, *Symbolism of Evil*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967.

15. Rudolf OTTO, *The Idea of the Holy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958.

16. Cf. David TRACY, *The Analogical Imagination*, New York, Crossroad, 1981.

meaning, and enable fidelity in the *praxis* of daily life.<sup>17</sup>

Central to the Christian symbol system are the symbols of *logos* and *pneuma*. What follows will focus on the symbol of *logos* (and its cognate, *sophia*) with observations on the symbol *pneuma*, where relevant. In fact, pneumatic symbolism developed in Christianity as a corollary to sapiential symbolism.

To interpret the *sophia* symbolism (Paul) and the *logos* symbolism (John) as applied to Jesus in the New Testament most scholars today turn to the Wisdom Literature of late Judaism. Given the heightened perception of divine transcendence in late Judaism (especially in apocalyptic circles which had some relationship with the Jewish sages<sup>18</sup>), an attempt to balance, if not to mollify, this experience of divine distance is evident in the development of consolatory symbols of divine immanence such as the Wisdom, the Word, and the Spirit of God, the Angels, etc.

The symbols, *sophia*, *logos*, and *pneuma* are similar in meaning. They are cosmic in scope, and they express the universal presence and efficacy of God.<sup>19</sup> The cognate symbols, *sophia* and *logos*, with their "noetic" connotations evince a certain affinity with the Hellenistic cast of mind.<sup>20</sup> But there is a significant difference between Greek cosmology and Jewish theiology (or "creationism"). For the Greek, the world is *cosmos*, an intelligible, harmonious whole, inviting and sustaining the human quest for knowledge. The world's order is immanent in its intelligible structure. For Hebrew thought, however, cosmocentrism cedes to anthropocentrism. From the perspective of the human longing for meaning and value in life, the world often appears to be *chaos* rather than *cosmos*. In Genesis the drama of creation is presented as the work of God overcoming primeval *chaos*.<sup>21</sup> Thus for Hebrew anthropocentrism (the human being is image and likeness of God in Genesis), the world without the continuously creative presence of God is a world without order. To express their faith in the ordering of the world through divine immanence (rather than through its own immanent structure) the Jewish sages speak symboli-

17. Cf. Gregory BAUM, *Religion and Alienation*, New York, Paulist Press, 1975, pp. 238-62.

18. Cf. Christopher ROWLAND, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Christianity*, New York, Crossroad, 1982.

19. Cf. Genesis 2:7; Wisdom 1:7; 12:1; Psalm 139:7-10.

20. According to contemporary scholarship, the influence of Hellenism on late Judaism and on the New Testament is pervasive.

21. Cf. John MCKENZIE, "Creation," *Dictionary of the Bible*, Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1965, pp. 157-160.



cally of the personified *sophia* of God.<sup>22</sup> As a symbol of divine immanence *sophia* expresses God's presence as implanting meaning in the world.<sup>23</sup> The world's meaning or order does not lie immanent in cosmic structures. Its meaning or order result from the dynamic presence of God, realizing his plan for his creation. As dynamic, activating, energizing, life-giving, God's presence is aptly symbolized as the divine *pneuma*. As effective of God's intentionality for order, form, meaning, God's presence is appropriately symbolized as the divine *sophia* or *logos*.

To translate this religious symbolism into the idiom of our contemporary, evolutionary or processive worldview we might say that the divine *pneuma* names God's power effecting genuine novelty in the creative advance of the universe, while the divine *sophia* or *logos* names God's effective plan or purpose naturally and historically realized in the world. Novelty without order would be *chaos*, but order without novelty is *cosmos* at the cost of the eternal repetition of the same.

When we turn to the New Testament usage of these symbols of divine immanence, we find grounds for a contemporary presentation of the Christian doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation which not only do not betray monotheism but in fact reinforce it by explicating its religious or salvific import. Recent scholarship has focused its investigation of the meaning of New Testament sapiential Christology in dialogue with the Old Testament sapiential literature. Thus, it is immediately apparent that the strictly monotheistic self-identity of the Hebrew tradition could have incorporated symbols of divine immanence only in faithful accord with the demands of Yahwism: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One.'<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, *pneuma*, *sophia* and *logos* signify the immanence of the One God—they do not name parallel or subordinate deities. Thus, when linguistic exuberance portrays *sophia* as personal, what is intended is poetic personification. Or, better, *sophia* is portrayed personally because she symbolizes the presence of the Personal God to his creation.

When Paul proclaims Jesus "the Wisdom of God," the meaning of this confession must be consonant with the Old Testament symbol of *sophia*. If in Judaism that symbol expressed the meaning that God implants in his creation, then Paul is claiming that Jesus is the apo-

22. Cf. Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24.

23. Gerhard VON RAD, *Wisdom in Israel*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1972, 148.

24. Deuteronomy 6:4.

calypso of Wisdom, that Jesus is the embodiment of the divine plan or purpose behind the creation of the world. Jesus is the divine "secret hidden from the ages."<sup>25</sup>

For the Christian Jesus is the "chief clue" in the attempt to answer the question of the ultimate meaning of reality. In Jesus God reveals "what it's all about." Jesus is God's answer to the human "why" about the world. Paul is not presenting the descent of a pre-existent divine hypostasis. He is, rather, universalizing the significance of Jesus the Christ through whom he has found salvation. Thus, Paul's sapiental Christology is an illustration of that tendency to universalism inherent in all the great world religions. As a strict Jewish monotheist, Paul is convinced that only God can be our salvation. He is also convinced that the only God there is has encountered him through Jesus. Thus, the universal significance of Jesus as God's Wisdom is a testimony to monotheism.

The Johannine Prologue is another illustration of the Christological use of protological symbolism to universalize the significance of Jesus. This Prologue is, obviously, the *locus classicus* for the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation: the Word became flesh. Here it seems we have a clear (literal?) presentation of the descent of a pre-existent divine *logos* (person?). I am convinced, however, that this interpretation is too simple. In my opinion we should interpret the Johannine "incarnation of the *logos*" in rapport with the interpretation given above to Paul's Wisdom Christology. It seems to me that Paul and John in their use, respectively, of the Wisdom and Word symbolism assert the cosmic significance of Jesus as divine meaning incarnate.

James Dunn (with whose interpretation of Paul's Wisdom Christology I concur) holds that the doctrine of pre-existence emerges with John: "... the Fourth Evangelist was the first Christian writer to conceive clearly of the personal pre-existence of the *logos*-Son and to present it as a fundamental part of his message."<sup>26</sup> With Dunn's interpretation of the pre-existence of the *logos* in John I respectfully disagree. John's Christology is quite "high," but John is not a pre-existent Origen! I find J.A.T. Robinson's observations on the Christology of the Fourth Gospel both congenial and convincing.<sup>27</sup> Robinson insists

25. Colossians 1:26.

26. James DUNN, *Christology in the Making*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1980, p. 249.

27. J.A.T. ROBINSON, "The Use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology Today", in B. LINDARS and S.S. SMALLEY, eds, *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp. 61-78.

that sonship in John's Gospel is fundamentally Hebraic in its meaning. It designates "a functional relationship marked by character."<sup>28</sup> Citing as evidence John 8:34-47, Robinson claims that to be a son is to reveal the style of action characteristic of the father. Jesus' "moral affinity" with God, his perfect imaging of the One he called Father, flowed from the fact that his entire life was lived "from God." "It is this sense of belonging elsewhere, this sense that the source and ground of his being and acting and speaking is not 'of himself', nor 'of this world', but 'from above', that the Evangelist seeks to express, spatially and temporally, in the late-Jewish, Hellenistic myth of pre-existence."<sup>29</sup> Thus interpreted, the Johannine *logos* Christology is in basic continuity with the Pauline *sophia* Christology. In both we are presented with the evocative language of the symbol and not the literal language of the concept.

### *Contemporary Theology*

In what follows I intend to illustrate the recent recovery in Christian theology of the humanity of Christ as the concrete point of departure for new understandings of what the Christian doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity mean. It seems to me that the theologians I have chosen as illustrations are all sensitive to the demands of monotheism as they attempt in similar ways to present Christ and Spirit as explications of that monotheism which is distinctive of Christianity

The Catholic "Church Father" of the twentieth century is, of course, the German Jesuit, Karl Rahner. Throughout his theological career Rahner was always the "mystagogue," one who lived from his profound experience of the gracious nearness of the transcendent God, and who sought to lead others into that experience. While Rahner is a Christocentric (never Christomonist) theologian, his Christ is always the meditator of the One Divine Mystery.

Vatican I charged Catholic theologians with the task of showing the interconnection of the doctrines of the tradition in reference to the final end of the human person. At Vatican II the Church accepted the principle of "the hierarchy of dogma": "Catholic theologians . . . should remember that in Catholic teaching there exists an order or 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith."<sup>30</sup>

28. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

30. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11.

Some "foundational truths" define the reality of Christian faith for all Christians beyond confessional disagreements. Throughout his theological investigations Karl Rahner often refers to this hermeneutical norm for establishing the "essence" of Christianity. He frequently insists on the clear formulation of this "basic substance" of the faith to address the burning issue of "the possibility of belief today."<sup>31</sup>

Basic to Christianity as a monotheistic religion is its doctrine of God. To refer to the incomprehensible and ineffable reality of God Rahner characteristically speaks of the Mystery or the Holy Mystery. To underscore Christian monotheism Rahner reminds us that the word *theos* in the New Testament practically always signifies the One Jesus called Father.<sup>32</sup> This God is the Yahweh of the Old Testament and the Allah of the Qur'an. Again, this God of the New Testament is the Personal One of the prophets of Israel.<sup>33</sup> Thus, when Christians speak of the Personal God or of God as a Person, they mean the God whom Jesus called *Abba* and whom the disciples of Jesus dare to call "our Father." In speaking of this God (the Father) as Person Christians are not speaking anthropomorphically. Our modern notion of human personhood is derived ultimately from the prophetic revelation of God as Personal Will, calling humanity to responsible (personal) existence.<sup>34</sup>

When we turn to the classical Christian expression of the Divine Mystery in relation to the world and to humanity, we come with Rahner to the "basic substance" of the faith. And that basic substance is expressed in the doctrine of the Trinity. But here we must be careful. To speak of the eternal "tri-personal" God as the definition of Christian Trinitarianism is misleading. The traditional language of "three Persons in One God" is misleading precisely in relation to our modern notion of person, defined in terms of consciousness and freedom. To employ our modern notion of person to define the meaning of the "three persons" in God would result in "three gods". We do not find this doctrine in the New Testament. What we do find there is what is called "economic" Trinitarianism,

31. Cf. Karl RAHNER, "Thoughts on the Possibility of Faith Today," *Theological Investigations*, Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1966, Vol. V, pp. 3-22.

32. Karl RAHNER, "Theos in the New Testament," *Theological Investigations*, Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1961, Vol I, pp. 79-148.

33. Cf. Paul TILLICH, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1955.

34. Cf. John Cobb, *The Structure of Christian Existence*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1967, pp. 94-106.

the story of God's self-revelation to the world through Jesus Christ and in the Spirit. For Christians, to encounter Christ in the power of the Spirit is to encounter the One and only One God. This experience of God in the "economy" of salvation is the basis for the later doctrine of the eternal Trinity, the doctrine known as "immanent" Trinitarianism. In this doctrine Christians assert that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity. The logic of the faith here moves from actuality to possibility. If encountering Christ is encountering the definitive epiphany of God in history, then this actuality must always have been a possibility in God. If the experience of the Spirit is the experience of the divine presence in the world, graciously grounding both the possibility of the Christ and the Christian's recognition of the Christ, then this divine presence in creation must always have been a real possibility in God. "The unoriginated God (called 'Father') has from eternity the opportunity of an historical self-expression and likewise the opportunity of establishing himself as himself at the innermost center of the intellectual creature as the latter's dynamism and goal."<sup>35</sup> It is indeed misleading to call these "eternal real possibilities" in God "persons."

The *logos* and the *pneuma* name the two modes of the immanence of the transcendent God and these two modes mutually condition one another. One way to express this mutual conditioning would be an analogy taken from human self-understanding. Theologians have traditionally described the basic structure of the human being in a bidimensional manner. On the one hand, the human person is a being *in* the world, a bodily being in history. On the other hand, the human person is simultaneously *beyond* the world, a spiritual being in transcendence over the world. Thus, the human person is a being of history and of transcendence. Now these two dimensions of being human mutually condition one another. Transcendence names the ground of, or the presupposition behind, human self-enactment in history. Historical self-enactment is the concrete mediation of transcendence. If we apply this way of understanding the human being to God's modes of presence to the world, we can say that the *pneuma* grounds and conditions the historical incarnation of the *logos*, while the *logos* incarnate historically mediates the *pneuma*. The Spirit thus designates the dynamic presence of the One God in the world.

35. Karl RAHNER, "Oneness and Threefoldness of God in Discussion with Islam," *Theological Investigations*, New York, Crossroad, 1983, Vol. XVIII, p. 118.

Christology becomes "a moment in a universal Pneumatology."<sup>36</sup> Christ for the Christian focuses the Spirit as God's self-communication to the world.

As *logos* or *sophia*, incarnate, Jesus Christ becomes for Christians the apocalypse of universal Grace (the *pneuma*). In the words of the New Testament: "in him dwelt all the fulness (*pleroma*) of the godhead bodily."<sup>37</sup> Behind this confession is the general Christian conviction expressed by Paul: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."<sup>38</sup> Thus for Christians does Jesus the Christ become the symbol, the effective visibility of the invisible God. As symbol, Jesus is the effective focus of God's universal presence in the Spirit because he is grounded in what is symbolized, God for us.

As a summary statement of their faith Christians confess that Jesus is God (never, by the way, that God is Jesus). But the meaning of this summary statement must be clearly understood. It is a very special linguistic usage of the copula. The "is" here affirms a mysterious union—not an identity—between God and the man Jesus. Since the time of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 the Christian tradition has expressed this mystery as the "hypostatic union." Today we would speak of a "personal union." As this union or coincidence of the human and the divine, Jesus is the Grace-grounded fulfillment of an anthropology that affirms that the human being is the *finitum capax infiniti*, an anthropology inspired by Genesis 1:26-27 wherein humanity is described as the image and likeness of God.

A similar understanding of Trinity and Incarnation is proposed by the Dutch theologian, Piet Schoonenberg.<sup>39</sup> According to Schoonenberg the problem with classical Christology was the Trinitarian conception of the eternal *logos* as a divine person. Just as before the Council of Chalcedon Apollinaris replaced the human soul of Jesus with the *logos*, so after Chalcedon the "neo-Chalcedonian" theologian, Leontius of Byzantium, replaced the human personhood of Jesus with the pre-existent divine person of the *logos*. Schoonenberg overcomes this last vestige of "replacement Christology" with a neat inversion of the position of Leontius. Since the

36. Karl RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1978, p. 317.

37. Colossians 2:9.

38. 2 Cor 5:19.

39. Cf. Piet SCHOONENBERG, *The Christ*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1969.

word, *hypostasis* (Trinitarian "person"), does *not* include the notions of consciousness and freedom, the *logos* and the *pneuma* are "modes of God's presence, extensions of the Father's being."<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, the position of Leontius should be inverted so that the *logos becomes* a person in the man, Jesus, instead of the human nature of Jesus becoming a person through the *logos*.

Jesus is a human person. In terms of *our* understanding of person, the Triune God would be One Person (the Father). Only through the human personhood of Jesus is there an "I-Thou" relation in God. Pre-existence is a temporal image of transcendence. Thus, the only God we know is the One who *becomes* triune through the process of history.

With Schoonenberg we are far removed from the immutable God of Greek metaphysics. History is not alien to God. Indeed, history becomes the drama of divine freedom, the arena of God's self-determination to *become* our God. Here with so much contemporary Christology we are reminded of the beautiful words of Irenaeus: "the glory of God is humanity fully alive."

In his recent book on Christology the theologian John Dwyer proposes "a new language for faith."<sup>41</sup> Dwyer avers that "the sixteen centuries during which Christology was dominated by Greek categories of thought . . . are over."<sup>42</sup> Dwyer envisions a thorough reconstruction of Christology in the light of our contemporary understanding of the mindset of the New Testament.

For Dwyer Jesus is the manifestation of God, of God's freedom to be what God does not have to be. The eternally self-sufficient God wills not to be alone. God wills to be for us. Word and Spirit (a Rahnerian echo can be heard here) name the conditions in God that make possible the realization of the divine freedom to become our God: "Word is the real condition of possibility, within God, for the existence of anyone or anything outside him, and Spirit is the condition of possibility for his accepting and loving presence with things and persons outside him."<sup>43</sup> Word and Spirit are not persons in our sense of the term. They name the personal forms of

40. Piet SCHOONENBERG, "Trinity—the Consummated Covenant: Theses on the Doctrine of the Trinitarian God," *Sciences Religieuses—Studies in Religion* (Fall 1975-76) p. 114.

41. John DWYER, *Son of Man and Son of God*, New York, Paulist Press, 1983.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

relatedness of the One God who "is, in the modern sense, one person, not three."<sup>44</sup>

Dwyer's Christology is a clear example of a contemporary theological effort to situate traditional Christocentrism within a broader theocentrism. This project is an attempt literally to explicate the significance of the New Testament's use of the preposition "through" as applied to Jesus. Christian faith moved *through* Jesus to God. *Through* Jesus Christian faith learns the meaning of the word "God."

"When Christology is at its best it is about God, not about the mode of the incarnation or the make-up of the person of Christ."<sup>45</sup> In the long history of the interaction of "Athens" and "Jerusalem" in Christian thought, the inherited Greek concept of God was allowed to preside over theological development. Through this philosophical notion of God as eternal, necessary, one and immutable, biblical monotheism was basically retained. However, this pre-Christian understanding of God did not "leave room for Jesus' understanding of God to influence the church's understanding of what God was like."<sup>46</sup>

A major awakening is taking place among Christians today because of contemporary efforts to construct a "theological christology."<sup>47</sup> For Christians Jesus remains the revelation of what humanity means, but he is so because he is first and foremost the revelation of what divinity means.

It seems to me that these new directions in Christological reflection are most significant for Muslim-Christian dialogue. Among others, Smail Balic has been severely critical of all presentations of Jesus that fail to point consistently away from him to "the God of revelation": "If Jesus is so interpreted that we no longer refer to the concept of God as found in revelation, then Christianity and Islam have nothing at all in common. . . . The Western theologians who distance themselves from the God of revelation open up a gulf which could make Muslim-Christian dialogue impossible."<sup>48</sup> I

44. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

45. David CALVERT, *From Christ To God*, London, Epworth Press, 1983, p. 65.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

48. Smail BALIC, "The Image of Jesus in Contemporary Islamic Theology" in Annetmarie SCHIMMEL and Abdoldjavad FALATURI, eds, *We Believe In One God*, New York. The Seabury, Press, 1979, p. 1.



trust that Balic would approve of the theocentric thrust of much contemporary Christology.

In the next section of this paper I will attempt a Christian reading of the Islamic witness to God and his Mercy toward his people.

### *Islamic Monotheism*

In her recent book, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History*, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad speaks positively of a certain kind of non-Muslim interpretation of Islam: "It may be the case that the non-Muslim willing to approach his material with sensitivity and appreciation is in a good position to balance attempts at sympathetic interpretation with the objectivity that sometimes only distance can afford."<sup>49</sup> In what follows "sympathetic interpretation" is intended, and "objectivity" is hoped for.

Both Islam and Christianity continue to prove themselves to be living religious traditions in terms of the quality of human life they inspire, nourish and promote. For both traditions this "humanism" is the practical result of the divine initiative in revelation. For Christians, that revelation is found basically in the Scriptures—but "in the Scriptures as received and understood throughout the centuries by the whole Church's lived faith."<sup>50</sup> For Muslims, that revelation is found in the Qur'an. Now many Muslims would stop with that last period, holding that the Qur'an's "maturity as revelation, if we may so speak, is immediate. It does not incorporate into its nature the public reception of its message, except in the very narrow sense that controversy within the preaching years is mirrored in its pages."<sup>51</sup> The absolute character of the Qur'an as Word of God is a traditional tenet of Islamic orthodoxy. Some contemporary Islamic theologians, however, find evidence in the Qur'an itself for the significance of the reception of revelation.

### According to Fazlur Rahman:

Orthodoxy (indeed all medieval thought) lacked the intellectual capacity to say both that the Qur'an is entirely the Word of God and, in an ordinary

49. Yvonne Yazbeck HADDAD, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1982, p. xv.

50. Edmund DOBBIN, "The Catholic College and the Magisterium," A Paper Presented for a Symposium on "The Catholic College in the 1980's" at Merrimack College, October 10, 1981, p. 3.

51. Kenneth CRAIG, *Muhammad and the Christian*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1984, pp. 19-20.

sense, also entirely the word of Muhammad. The Qur'an obviously holds both . . . The Qur'an is . . . pure Divine Word, but, of course, it is equally intimately related to the inmost personality of the Prophet Muhammad . . . the Divine Word flowed through the Prophet's heart.<sup>52</sup>

This sensitivity to the reception of revelation on the part of the Prophet opens the door—it seems to me—to a critical appropriation of the Qur'an as the Word of God in vital rapport with subsequent Islamic self-understanding up to and with urgent focus on present Islamic self-understanding inspired by the resources of the same Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman has continued to unfold the ramifications of his anti-fundamentalist position in a recent book on Islam in tension with modernity. With a concern similar to the efforts of Christian theologians to formulate a "hierarchy of dogma," Rahman ~~of interest~~ <sup>in</sup> an understanding of the Qur'an as a unity or as an ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>connected</sup> whole which is then to be brought into correlation with the present situation of Muslims. The first movement, as he puts it, is "from the specifics of the Qur'an to the eliciting and systematizing of its general principles, values, and long-range objectives" and "the second is to be from this general view to the specific view that is to be formulated and realized *now*."<sup>53</sup> As an anti-fundamentalist Catholic who repudiates the pseudo-fidelity of non-historical "orthodoxy," I cannot help but register my own congenial "reception" of Rahman's renovating approach to his own religious tradition.

Rahman is not alone in his recognition of the need for a critical approach to the Qur'an and to Islamic tradition. Rudi Paret observes that "Islam is as much in need as Christianity of demythologization."<sup>54</sup> Paret extends this demand for demythologization to the whole of the Qur'an. With Rotraud Wielandt, he is convinced that if the critical study of the Qur'an is pursued with a mind-set free from political and other extraneous purposes, then Muslims will more easily be able "to free themselves from the fear that an historical understanding of the Qur'an would mean the end of their religion."<sup>55</sup> Like Rahman, Paret is confident that critical appropriation of the Qur'an would mean a new beginning, a new vitality for the Muslim community.

52. Fazlur RAHMAN, *Islam*, New York, Doubleday & Company, 1966, pp. 26, 29.

53. Fazlur RAHMAN, *Islam and Modernity*, University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 7.

54. Rudi PARET, "Revelation and Tradition in Islam" in SCHIMMEL and FALATURI, eds., *op. cit.* (note 48), p. 32.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

The Qur'an is a religious masterpiece of testimony to monotheism and to the ramifications of monotheistic faith for the quality of human life. In what follows I offer the reflections of a Christian on the vital testimony of Islam's fidelity to the One and only One God.

Monotheistic faith means faith in a transcendent God. In their fidelity to monotheism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all witness to the divine transcendence, and, of course, this common witness displays both similarities and differences. For all of these traditions God, as creator of the world, surpasses, transcends, "is beyond" everything finite. But this understanding of God as transcendent is not the result of philosophical reasoning. It is, rather, rooted in the religious experience of the faithful, formed by the religious traditions not only expressed in the Bible and in the Qur'an. As a religious understanding of God, the notion of divine transcendence becomes the vision of a *personal* God. And, since the essence of personhood is freedom, the transcendent God is the eminently free God, determined or constrained by nothing outside of himself. As a testimony to this God, the only God there is, the Qur'an vigorously proclaims the freedom of God who reveals his freedom in his fidelity to his people. Indeed, it has been said "that the Muslim's radical commitment to the absolute, sovereign freedom of God is the decisive issue behind all other questions, including that of a 'unitarian' over against a 'trinitarian' confession."<sup>56</sup>

In the Qur'an, as in the Bible, God is portrayed in terms of "Will," and revelation is the disclosure of the divine will for humanity. As eternal Will and Freedom, God is Person, and as Person, transcendent over all creation. But this transcendent God of the Qur'an and of the Bible is not the deistic God of the Enlightenment, the God who is not involved with his creation. The only God there is is the God of freedom who reveals his freedom in his fidelity (his "involvement") to his creation.

Thus it seems to me that sustained reflection on the *religious* implications of the notion of divine transcendence leads us to an appropriate understanding of divine immanence. Immanence becomes, not a crypto-polytheistic reification of the divine, but rather the personal presence or fidelity of God to his creation. As immanent in *this* sense, the transcendent God can freely deign to come into association

56. Wilhem BILLFELD, "The Relation of the Gospels to Islamic Culture and Religion", in Donald MILLER and Dikran HADJIAN, eds, *Jesus and Man's Hope*, Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971, p. 276.

with his creatures. He can reveal his will; he can speak to the prophets; he can reveal the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the Qur'an affirms divine immanence in terms of the language of revelation and prophecy. Especially pointed is Sura 50:16: "I am nearer to you than your jugular vein," an image far more graphic than Augustine's famous *intimior intimo meo*.

Regarding the issue of divine immanence a Christian cannot help but be fascinated by those sections of the Qur'an that speak of God's *ruh* and *amr*.<sup>57</sup> Some Christian and some Jewish theologians have attempted to "explain" these terms as influences of the Scriptures on the Qur'an. Patent in these attempts is, of course, the reductionistic bias which denies any originality to the Prophet of Islam. I intend no such reductionism. Again, I register my fascination with what I would call these symbols of the immanence of the Divine Mystery in the Qur'an. In those texts which refer to the *ruh min amr-Allah*, *ruh* seems to mean the Spirit of prophecy, authenticating the revelations given to the Prophet.<sup>58</sup> "The accent here can be either on the Spirit of Prophecy itself, by virtue of which the Prophet receives his revelations, or rather on the revelation the Spirit communicates."<sup>59</sup> At any rate, it is through the Spirit that Mohammad warns (Sura 16:2; 40:15) and guides (Sura 42:52). Thus it seems to me that the *ruh* expresses the "how" of divine revelation, while the *amr* expresses the "what" of revelation. "What the Spirit reveals is 'with regard to the *amr* (dispensation) of God'."<sup>60</sup> In the Qur'an "the word (*amr*) indicates God's sovereign Command and Commandment, His design and dispensation in governing the Universe, revealed to the Prophet."<sup>61</sup>

The affinity between what I would call the Qur'anic symbols of *ruh* and *amr* with the Biblical symbols of *pneuma* and *logos / sophia* seems clear to me. Here we can note what might be called the "experiential logic" of a religious tradition which envisions the divine as transcendent Person. God becomes the Supreme Subject of human history, the ultimate source and goal of cosmic order, meaning, design (*amr*), and the ultimate power (*ruh*) effecting all provisional realiza-

57. The Qur'anic texts in question are: 16:2; 17:85; 32:4; 40:15; 42:52; 65:12; 45:17,18; 97:3,4.

58. Ary A. Roest Crolius, *The Word in the Experience of Revelation in the Qur'an and Hindu Scriptures*, Rome, Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1974, p. 78.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

tions of cosmic order unto that final order of Resurrection and the Day of Accounting.<sup>62</sup>

Both Islam and Christianity have at times so emphasized the transcendence of God that the Divine Will has been portrayed as disconcertingly arbitrary. Such a tendency in medieval Catholicism was characteristic of the philosophies of Voluntarism and Nominalism. The neo-orthodox thought of the twentieth century Protestant theologian Karl Barth is another illustration closer to us in time of Christian emphasis on divine transcendence. The American "Death of God" theologies of the 1960's could be seen as the consequence of Barthian theology. Extreme emphasis on divine transcendence does lead to deism and atheism. A living religious tradition, however, provides safeguards against potentially dangerous non-dialectical emphases. Islam, for instance, provides all religious traditions with a powerful reminder of the dangers inherent in one-sided emphases on divine immanence. Such emphases can lead to pantheism and polytheism, and it was against the polytheism of Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries that the Qur'an proclaimed the *shahada*: "There is no God but God." This testimony to monotheism is the glory of Islam. And, as a religious tradition that lives from the presence of God, Islam knows that transcendence does not mean distance.

The religious witness of Islam to the transcendence of God implies a distinctively Islamic anthropology. As in Judaism and Christianity, so in Islam the human being is defined primarily in relation to God. Thus, an understanding of humanity in relation to a transcendent God reveals humanity as transcendent over the rest of creation. By Islam, literally *self-surrender to God*, Muslims find their basic identity as servants of God. And, enhancing human dignity still further is the Qur'anic portrayal of God's creation of Adam as his "representative" on earth, a religious anthropology that would remind the Christian of the Biblical summons to humanity to become the "image" of God.<sup>63</sup>

Paradigmatic for Islamic anthropology is, of course, the Prophet. Indeed, "the person of Muhammad, as the Islamic confession avows, became inseparable from the proclamation of the oneness of God."<sup>64</sup>

62. Cf. Fazlur RAHMAN, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, Chicago, Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980, p. 117.

63. 2:30-3.

64. CRAIG, *op. cit.* (note 51), p. 21.

The message of God becomes concrete in the messenger even to the extent that "the conduct of the Prophet's *Jihad* becomes part of the revelation."<sup>65</sup> While Islamic orthodoxy disclaims any mediation between God and humanity, lived Islamic faith (especially in Sufism) has always been inspired and guided by the *sunna* of the Prophet who was called the "Proof" of God's Word.<sup>66</sup> In tension with doctrine, Islamic devotion became for many Muslims the *imitatio Muhammadi*. Wherever this "cult of the Prophet" as the Perfection of humanity is expressed, Christians note the similarity with their own faith in Christ as the paradigmatic human being.<sup>67</sup> Rejecting that form of mediation identified with the incarnation of a divine hypostasis, Muslims in practice express what might be called humanity's need and longing for mediation. While speech about divine immanence and incarnational mediation is obviously "more at home in Christianity,"<sup>68</sup> Islamic theologians might be willing to entertain the recently formulated position of some Christian theologians—the position of "mediated immediacy." According to this understanding of the divine-human relationship, God remains immediately present to his spiritual creatures, but that very immediacy must somehow be concretely mediated to bodily constituted and historically formed human beings.<sup>69</sup> This notion of mediation is not intended to limit the divine agency. It has taken Christians a long time to overcome that pervasive religious presumption that the more an activity is divine the less it is human. Divine hegemony over creation does not entail the replacement of the finite by the Infinite. God acts in and through his creatures, and his freedom is effective in grounding the freedom of his human "representatives." In the Qur'an God offers guidance, and guidance implies human freedom and responsibility.

The basic orientation of the Qur'an is practical. "Muhammad's monotheism was, from the very beginning, linked up with a *humanism* and a sense of social and economic justice whose intensity is no less than the intensity of the monotheistic idea, so that whoever carefully reads the early revelations of the Prophet cannot escape the conclusion that the two must be regarded as expressions of the same idea."<sup>70</sup> According to the Qur'an God's will is dynamically creative

65. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

67. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 58.

68. W. Montgomery WATT, *Islam and Christianity Today*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983, p. 52.

69. Cf. Charles DAVIS, *Body as Spirit*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1976.

70. RAHMAN, *Islam* (note 52), p. 2.

of order in the world. "The basic élan of the Qur'an is moral whence flows its emphasis on monotheism as well as on social justice."<sup>71</sup> Through *Islam*, their basic self-surrender to God, Muslims are awakened to moral responsibility. The God revealed through the prophet Muhammad is the same God as the One revealed through the prophets of the Bible. This "ethical monotheism" is the religious whence of that structure of human existence which we today call personhood.<sup>72</sup> Submission to the only God there is raises the believer to personal responsibility, realized in ethical *praxis* unto the creation of a moral universe.

But human beings are petty, proud, and prone to ignorance. Moral evil is an obvious fact in everyone's experience. Unlike Christianity, however, Islam has no doctrine of original sin and hence, no doctrine of redemption, while it is deeply aware of human frailty and sinfulness and God's merciful condescension to the human condition. Christians today are rethinking the doctrines of original sin and redemption. The former is the Christian recognition of the moral impotency of "man on his own," while the latter celebrates God's gracious empowerment of the human person to do the good. To Christian ears Islamic personalism has a "Pelagian" ring, and this impression is seemingly corroborated when Islam names the divine assistance "guidance." But, again, Christian self-understanding is changing in our day. Excessive emphasis on moral impotency, or depravity (traditionally more characteristic of Protestantism than of Catholicism), concomitant with an understanding of redemption as the work of God alone, have led some Christians to moral passivity. Catholic Christianity has traditionally taken human effort quite seriously. Its theology of redemptive grace has typically followed Augustine's teaching on *gratia cooperans* ("what God does in us with us"). Even Pelagius can be retrieved dialectically as a symbol of human responsibility.<sup>73</sup> For Islam human *praxis* is moral action guided by the Qur'an and exemplified by the Prophet. For Christianity human *praxis* is Grace-enabled action in discipleship to Christ. Differences there are to be sure. But maybe the similarities are sufficient to inspire cooperation among peoples whose moral responsibility is rooted in the same ethical monotheism. Perhaps the hour of our history is a *kairos*.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

72. Cf. COBB, *op. cit.* (note 34).

73. Cf. ROGER HARGHT, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, New York: Paulist Press, 1979, p. 51.

*Concluding Remarks*

Fidelity to monotheism for both Christianity and Islam demands both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The religious reason for concern with orthodoxy is "to let God be God." Idolatry or *shirk* must be avoided by means of a diachronic fidelity to tradition. But orthodoxy loses its religious purpose when concern for purity of doctrine becomes an end in itself, disengaged from life. The demand for orthopraxy is evident from the fact that monotheism begets an anthropology wherein conation supercedes cognition, wherein, indeed, conation sublates cognition. Islam is realized in moral effort toward social justice. Christianity is realized in provisional anticipations on earth of the Kingdom of God.

In recent years Christian theology has made a "praxiological turn." The primacy of *praxis* over theory is recognized in all of the representative forms of contemporary theology. While authentic Christians always knew that the criterion of God's final judgment was the quality of their agapeic *praxis* in relation to their neighbour, Christian theology tended to be more "idealistic" than "materialistic."<sup>74</sup> To paraphrase a famous "thesis" of Karl Marx—*theology merely interpreted the world, while the point was, of course, to change it*. Muslim thinkers have often criticized the "ascetic, 'dualistic' world view of Christianity."<sup>75</sup> Given the other-worldliness of traditional Christian spirituality, this Muslim criticism was accurate.

The "praxiological turn" in Christian thinking is in the process of overcoming religious other-worldliness. Many Christian theologians have opened themselves to the ramifications of historical consciousness. They have come to perceive time as the "material" of human freedom and history as the issue of human decisions. This new awareness of time is evident in Roman Catholicism since Vatican II. The general tone of the conciliar documents evidences a shift of focus from eternity to history, from the other world to this world, from the "soul" to the "body," from the private interiority of the individual believer to the public responsibility of the community of believers for the world. Ecclesiocentrism ceded to a sacramental understanding of the Church as servant of the world. In 1971 the Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome declared that work for social justice is a *constitutive* part of the Gospel. After the Council this

74. For Nicholas LASH Christianity is "idealistic" when it "wants to see what God will do next;" Christianity can be called "materialistic" when it recognizes human *praxis* as constitutive of history. Cf. his *A Matter of Hope*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, pp. 135-52.

75. Annemarie SCHIMMEL, "The Prophet Muhammed as a Center of Muslim Life and Thought" in SCHIMMEL and FALATUR, eds, *op. cit.* (note 48), p. 36.



new orientation has been elaborated quite extensively—as contemporary political and liberation theologies clearly illustrate.

In the last decades of the twentieth century the great world religions have much to offer our chaotic world. Interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims must continue to overcome the polemics of the past and to increase mutual understanding and respect. But the present world crisis, the crisis of the very survival of historical existence, summons all who are faithful to the Creator to go “beyond dialogue” to a new planetary consciousness, concretized in cooperation by all for all.

Christians need to embrace the “healthy worldliness of Muhammad.”<sup>76</sup> For all Muslims Jesus is a major prophet. Some Muslims like “Mahoud Ayoub and Ali Merad draw attention, with different nuances, to the Qur’anic recognition of the ‘special humanity’ of Jesus and his uniqueness.”<sup>77</sup> The Prophet and the Christ define for us, Muslims and Christians, that “personalism” which describes “the anthropological function of monotheism.”<sup>78</sup> Muslims and Christians realize that their religious personalism thrives only in a nurturing social matrix, and so we anticipate cooperation toward the construction of a new world order. But in the midst of our present global chaos we find consolation in our faith that persons as persons enjoy a divinely engendered freedom over every social construct that might constrain their pilgrimage to the God of freedom. “Contemporary experience shows clearly that the value of the human person transcends any political society, whatever its coercive powers. It shows even more clearly that only the definition and justification conferred on the limits of the person by a religious faith can give it greater eminence and dynamism.”<sup>79</sup> To serve a humanity hoping against hope Muslims and Christians must continue to be faithful to monotheism, to the Personal God of Qur’an and Bible who calls us to freedom.

As a Christian I can only hope that I have heard the beautiful words which the Qur’an places on the lips of Jesus:

I have but said to them what you have ordered me: “Adore God, my Lord and your Lord.”<sup>80</sup>

76. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

77. Willem BUILEFELD, “Other Faith Images of Jesus: Some Muslim Contributions to the Christological Discussion”, in Robert BERKEY and Sarah EDWARDS, eds, *Christological Perspectives*, New York, The Pilgrim Press, 1982, p. 211.

78. Michel MESLIN, “The Anthropological Function of Monotheism” in Claude GEFRE and Jean-Pierre Jossua, eds, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 36.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

80. 5:117.

## "Jesus, the Son of Man— His Life and Vision"

V. FRANCIS, S.J.

**I**N favourable conditions a good seed never perishes. It bears fruit, sometime thirty-fold, sometimes sixty-fold and sometimes a hundred-fold (Mk 4:20). The good seed sown by the late Fr Camile Bulcke in the fertile soil of Allahabad, the Prayagaraja, the most holy pilgrimage centre for Hindus and the seat of many important literary movements, has borne fruit, perhaps not obviously a hundred-fold, but such a fruit as it contains the seed of much promise. The fruit is the book *manavaputra isa*, the story of Jesus in Hindi by D. Raghuvamsha,<sup>1</sup> who is a deep thinker and a sensitive humanist, formerly the head of the Department of Hindi in the Allahabad University, highly respected and admired. He has authored many books that have established him as a trend-setting stylist in the Hindi literary world.

As the title of the book suggests, the author is interested in Jesus who is the son of man, who lives an authentic human life, carries out the mission assigned to him by the Father even unto death, with great sense of urgency, and finally reaches the height of his glory in his resurrection and ascension. We do not mean that the author has played down the divinity of Christ. There are many places where he shows a deep respect for all the sentiments with which Christians regard Jesus as their Saviour and God (pp. viii-ix, 65, etc.). But the stress is, no doubt, on the humanity of Jesus. Why is this so?

The answer to this question lies in the Hindu religious culture. Man is considered to be a unique reality, made up of the *trigunatmika maya* (the visible reality consisting of three strands) and the eternal self-in-part (or the eternal Self itself, according to non-dualism). He is endowed with faculties that make him one with matter and, at the

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1. *manavaputra isa—jivan aur darsan* By Dr. RAGHUVAMSHA, Allahabad Lokbharti Prakashan, 1985. Pp. xii-316. Rs. 50. An earlier version of this review article appeared in a modified form in Hindi, in *dharmaayug*, Easter issue of 1986.

same time, different from it, as he is clearly placed in the realm of what is spiritual. In fact, man is even considered superior to other spiritual entities because he has some faculties which pure spirits do not have: he can feel, cry, laugh, choose to be what he is, struggle and reach the summit of perfection, and transcend the limitations of his givenness, even while still confined to them. He has evil tendencies, but if he wants he can conquer them. He is then a little god, as he possesses, in the likeness of God, the capacity to be both immanent and transcendent. For this reason it is said that those who are born as human beings are really fortunate. Indeed, in the Puranas it is said that the devas (gods) are envious of men and desire to be born as human beings. In the Christian tradition, too, man holds an enviable position (Ps 8:4). Indeed, after the Incarnation it is clear that the human reality is itself the locus and the instrument of salvation. We work out our salvation not by escaping from our humanness but by accepting being incarnate in its very depth.

Dr Raghuvamsha is obviously charmed by Jesus as he finds in him a spirit who lives his human reality as a total testimony of the ideal he stands for: the establishment of the Kingdom of God in pursuance of the true "dharma"—i.e. dutifulness in obedience. Jesus is bound by his limitations and yet is able to transcend them. He is thus the meeting point of humanity and divinity. The author brings this out by the way he presents Jesus enduring his suffering and death. Jesus suffers but he suffers with dignity for a cause. Consequently, his suffering results in his vindication, and also makes suffering itself a noble act when seen in the context of the cause for which one suffers.

The book is basically a biographical account of Jesus Christ: of his beginning and end, of his struggle and strength, of his mission and vision. Strictly speaking, we do not have a biography of Jesus in the proper sense of the word. What we have are the four Gospels which are the accounts of the historical life of Jesus seen through the prism of the faith-experience of the apostolic witnesses, represented by the four evangelists. Though there is a certain broad chronology in these Gospels, the perspective and the material found in them are not always the same. Throughout the centuries scholars have tried to synthesize them into one narrative. The present work is an instance in this direction, and is similar to the author's intimate friend's work, the late Fr C. Bulcke's *muktidata* (1st ed. in 1942). In fact, from a literary point of view, Dr Raghuvamsha's work may be con-

sidered superior to Fr Bulcke's. Bishop Mudartha rightly points out (p. xi) that it is probably the first serious attempt to present the total life of Jesus in Hindi literature.

Dr Raghuvamsha is not a Christian, and yet he presents us with life of Jesus written with a sense of intimacy and a very personal touch. It is not merely a factual, passive description of the life of a great person from the past. The book rather reveals the author's active involvement in every detail of Jesus' life. In this he verifies in himself the greatness of the Indian culture which is not only tolerant of others' views and visions but is open to assimilate what is true and good in others. The author has achieved his familiarity with the life of Christ by a protracted investigation and reflection on the topic. He has based himself on the classical summaries of the Gospels, particularly Fr Ferdinand Prat's *Jesus Christ* (p. viii). He has consulted much related material, especially on the history and geography of the then Jewish world (p. viii). This extensive study has given him the thoroughness and accuracy that is required of a good biographer. The treatment of the different phases of Jesus' life is systematic, precise and acceptable to Christians.

The biography is divided into twenty-seven chapters, each of which has an average of four or five subdivisions. It is introduced by Bishop B. Mudartha of the diocese of Allahabad with a personal note of appreciation. The author adds a separate note to this introduction to explain how and why he wrote this biography. He also provides a description of the geography and the socio-economic-political situation at the time of Jesus (pp. xiii-xvi). In the body of the biography he moves methodically, working out with exquisite skill every detail of his portrait of Jesus and his understanding of Jesus' life.

The style of the narration is outstanding, as could be expected of a litterateur of Dr Raghuvamsha's stature. Without becoming enmeshed in technicalities and learned references, the story progresses in a lively and lucid manner. The disparate details may be interconnected by a question mark (p. 297) or a surmise (pp. 15, 17, 39, 117). The interlacing of the geographical information and the historical events in the description makes the narration natural and credible (pp. 17, 22, 38, 41, 65, 68, 85, 209). The author is all the while conscious that literature operates in the realm of feeling and symbolism and therefore makes good use of emotions and symbols in his narra-

tion. The pathos in the description of Jesus' passion and death is specially powerful (chs. 23-26).

References to nature add to the emotional density of the situation (pp. 22, 255). The symbolic allusions are indicated wherever the author attempts to interpret the data (pp. 27, 74, 80, 86-87, 130, 203, 218, 296, 299) or paraphrase (pp. 13, 19, 26, 64, 120, 123, 128) an incident or a statement. We notice this especially in the following accounts: the adoration of the magi, the killing of the innocents, the chance-encounter of Simeon with Mary and Joseph, the finding of Jesus in the temple, the ministry of John the Baptist in the wilderness, the temptations of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, the controversy about the observance of the sabbath, the feeding of the multitudes, the parables of the sower, the Kingdom of God and the salt (pp. 31, 37, 41, 45, 46, 56, 65, 70, 78, 82, 88, 105, 107, 125-135). The author's suggestions are generally interesting, at times even provocative (pp. 9-11, 13, 31, 295).

In short, Dr Raghuvamsha has succeeded in depicting a life of Jesus that incorporates His values and ideals, such as love, kindness, service, forgiveness, and sacrifice—values and ideals that serve as the norms of moral conduct (pp. 56, 57, 95, 161, 168, 250). Indeed, it seems that the main aim of the author is to explicitate the moral ideals that are implicit in the life of Jesus. In this biography Jesus stands out as the embodiment of values that are linked with hope—the hope of a victory after the struggle, the hope of a resurrection after death.<sup>2</sup>

The book, beautifully printed, is thus true to the message of the Gospels and can be a great help to those Christians who want to deepen their faith through the discovery of a personal Jesus. But the appeal of the book extends obviously much beyond the restricted circle of Christians, for the author dwells on those values found in the life of Jesus that touch all people of all time. His message of love, compassion and service is perennial. His story is the story of every man, because every man struggles, and in this struggle he transcends the limitations of his givenness.

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2. The book is fittingly dedicated to (the memory of) "the revered Father Kamil Bulcke ('Kamil dada'), whose intimate love has remained the support of my life, and whose personal insistence is the inspiration of this project." On Fr. Bulcke who passed away on August 17, 1982, cf. VIDYAYOTI, December 1982, pp. 539-545.

## Forum

### "Relaunching the Indian Liturgy"

I read only this week the article "Relaunching the Indian Liturgy" by Fr M. Amaladoss in VIDYAJYOTI, October 1985. I appreciate many of the ideas proposed. I leave to others to discuss some of his suggestions. But I feel urged to object to one suggestion. "The Eucharistic Prayer," he writes, "has certainly the merit of being the first one composed in India. It does not mean that it is the best we could write. It is time that we left aside that controversial prayer and composed new and better ones." By all means let new and better ones be attempted. But why should we jettison this prayer and what was the controversy over it? It was composed by experts in history of liturgy who only rediscovered the worship experience of the early Christians through proclamations and acclamations. (Just as theologians today taking as their starting point the experience of the faith community are led to rediscover the original meaning of theology as knowledge of God, distinct from what it became later, viz. knowledge about God.)

Being composed in India this experience has to be expressed in Indian idiom available abundantly in our sacred literature and symbols. The writer admits that "in an Indian language in verse form the whole prayer could be sung." It is characteristic of the praying Indian to break forth into verse form and poetry, and if he cannot compose such a prayer he makes his own what is available in the "rich tradition of hymns and of stotras with an abundance of symbolic language." This prayer does have symbolic tradition and poetic flavour. If we forget the footnotes, it does *not* "lack spontaneity" and does *not* give "the impression that it is too contrived," but rather that it comes from the heart saturated in the Indian and Christian scriptures. The seven proclamations and acclamations bring to the altar as its centre the whole cosmos of time and space, evoking a kind of ecological experience and holistic perspective of the human race, and of the *consecratio mundi* effected by that one historical event which, through its transcendence, is in immanent contact with every point of time and space and with every human being to be saved and sanctified.

There is no difference of opinion about what Fr Amaladoss writes on "action and symbol." But as Br Max Thurian puts it, "the Eucharistic celebration is an *indivisible whole*: the *sacrament of sacrifice* to the Father and the *sacrament of presence* to the Church constitute one and the same sacrament in the perspective of . . . Jn 17:21". (*One Bread*, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 23). Therefore the

dichotomy Fr Amaladoss makes between the memorial meal symbolizing the Sacrifice and the *upacaras* as suited to a Benediction celebrating the presence is unnatural in Christian theology or in the Agamic form of worship. But when Fr Amaladoss writes light-handedly that "in elaborating the Indian Order of the Mass without any efforts to contextualise the central action and make it significant to the community, we have worked on the decorative and the illustrative", he is not doing justice to the commission that prayed over and worked on it.

Our Agamas never tire of reminding us that rituals not enlivened by *mantras* of profound meditation are worse than useless. He has not to labour that point. But he is not justified in saying that "in the course of one's experience or study one comes across a beautiful rite or symbol and then one looks around for an appropriate place where this can be fitted in." The Indian Eucharistic Prayer emerged from a lived experience of years which recaptured the experience of the liturgy of early Christian worship.

When, as said above, the whole cosmos of time and space is brought to the altar (whether in a community mass or in a private mass), meditation leads to a symbiotic experience with one's ancestors who for generations found their salvation through these Agamic forms of worship. And since Vatican II has enjoined on us that whatever is true, good or beautiful in these rites and cults and cultures *should not be lost*, they make their claim to be assumed into the representation of the Paschal Mystery in which they have all somehow participated (Vat II, GS 22, para 6, LG 13, etc.). The *upacaras* and the *naivedya* could stand the scrutiny of Luke 7:44 ff and of Gen 18:4 ff. I am not discussing minor details of *mudras*, etc., but the general attitude to ritual worship.

The article says (p. 448): "There is a real need to make the ritual action more relevant to people who are in the 'world' involved in various struggles for an integral liberation of people." And again (p. 454.): "The atmosphere created by the ritual action tends now rather to contemplation and worship and is less expressive of community and commitment." This is a strange dichotomy which is producing deleterious results. The Statement of the Indian Theological Association 8th Annual meeting on "Theological Education in India Today" (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, April 1985, p. 197) declares (no 7): "Theologizing ought to be a deeply contemplative activity. For there is no authentic theologizing except under the impulse of the indwelling Spirit who alone can impart the prophetic power to discern His actual workings in our world..." Can the Eucharist be less contemplative than theologizing? The dichotomy Amaladoss makes between liberation and contemplation is unnatural. South American theologians seem deeply contemplative. Ernesto Cardenal was trained by Merton.

The doubt expressed in the question "Prayer or Theological Discourse?" (p. 450) seems to be in conflict with the author's admission

in the first two lines of p. 448 that the most common reaction after an Indian celebration is, "Oh! How prayerful! How contemplative!" After the *anamnesis* the Indian Eucharistic Prayer intercedes: "We pray you, Father, crown the yearnings of this ancient land with the knowledge and love of your Son. Bless the efforts of all those who labour to build our country into a nation where the poor and the hungry will have their fill, where all people will live in harmony, where justice and peace, unity and love will reign . . ." The Indian Eucharistic Prayer has harmoniously blended contemplation, commitment and inculturation.

With regard to Fr Amaladoss's two objections on p. 452, some of those who composed the Anaphora are not in India today and Fr Amalorpavadas may expose his own theology on the Indian Eucharistic Prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer and the Indian Order of the Mass have been created in the light of a kind of synoptic Trinitarian and Christocentric spirituality and theology, without any unnatural dichotomy in the Persons of the Holy Trinity or the Person of Christ. Salvation History and Creation Spirituality have been blended, and well blended.

The Liturgical Commission should resubmit the Eucharistic Prayer for India without the footnotes to the CBCI for a fresh scrutiny and approval in the light of all the recent official declarations on inculturation, including Pope John Paul's words in India. There is certainly scope for making several adaptations of this prayer to meet the needs of various groups of worshippers. But there is no reason to drop it.

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# Meditation

## worship him with bread and rice

come, worship him with a loaf of bread.  
come into his presence with a bowl of rice.  
share out the rice and break the bread  
and hand it round and eat together  
in his company.

### 1

We take a long look at the loaf of bread,  
a long look at the bowl of rice.  
our hearts begin to grasp the mystery;  
our spirits discern god as a broken loaf of bread  
a shared bowl of rice.

is creation god's sharing out of god-self?  
and salvation, its wholeness and completion?  
—a self-sacrificing and a self-giving  
of god and us?

this is my body, my self, says god, given for you.  
and broken that you may be;  
and that your world may exist in beauty  
and power and promise,  
god's body broken, given, spread out as sky and sea  
and earth and you and me and life,  
and life's and love's myriad shapes  
and hues and scents.

is that why god is communion? is that  
why we are not made whole except  
in historical comradeship and  
shared basket, bowl and cup?

### 2

god, you break bread—  
with us, for us.  
you break your god-self in our fields.  
you multiply fish in our seas for the festival of life.  
god breaks, multiplies and shares god-self  
in the work and the hope and the struggle of

those who labour on land and sea; in the waters  
of lake tiberias; in the villages of galilee; in the  
garden of gethsemane, and of calvary's height.

on calvary god multiplies love.  
in its fire the earth and god and we become  
bread baked and broken.

on land and sea working women and men toil  
and break their selves and transform their body  
into rice and bread  
for the life of the world.  
our body is the bread, the rice, their body has become.  
we are their gift, one to another,  
and bread and rice made with the warmth and  
the strength and the tenderness of  
their humanity.

3

how, then, is it that their bowls are never full?  
and their children go hungry and wither in the bud?  
this rice, then, and this loaf of bread is  
judgment on us and our history; on our economic systems  
and our political practices, and on  
the connivance and complacency of our religiosities.

where many go hungry and some are sated,  
the judgment happens.  
there the churches of god and the name of god and  
the image of god are humiliated, violated, negated.

to eat without recognizing the body,  
without acknowledging the solidarity  
of bread and labour,  
of labour and the earth,  
of the earth and the human family  
the household of god,  
is to eat judgment in which the human and the divine  
stand (or fall) annulled.

4

rice is for sharing.  
bread must be broken and given.  
every bowl, every belly shall have its fill.  
to leave a single bowl unfilled is  
to rob history of meaning;  
to grab many a bowl for myself is  
to empty history of god.

rice is the symbol of god. so is bread.  
all wealth is. wealth has a human meaning, and  
a divine meaning. its deepest meaning is  
to be a medium of brotherhood and sisterhood.  
riches and resources are stuff with which  
to build friendship.

## 5

it was thus, was it not? that jesus of nazareth  
saw and handled bread. in his praxis  
bread must reach every woman and man and child  
every day. bread and rice and the concreteness  
of the reign of god coming to our earth.  
they are its daily sight and touch and taste.  
shared rice and bread are the doing of what god requires.  
they are the experience of god's name's meaningfulness  
on this earth.

how does god appear to the hungry man or woman?  
god dare not appear to the hungry, said gandhiji,  
except in the form of a bowl of rice or  
a loaf of bread: primordial sacraments.

## 6

a moment comes when jesus sees himself as bread.  
he must, from then on, be broken, and given away  
that others may live and be free.  
he must be laid as service spread out  
at working people's feet.

god, we wish to thank you for jesus.  
thank you for the working class and their gift of rice  
and bread and life. their hands are here, in this  
bread, and their smell and the taste of their sweat.

we wish to thank you, god, for every sister and brother  
present here, for each one's commitment and quest,  
and each one's name. thank you for the promise of each heart  
and for the kindness in the hands we now grasp.

we thank you for the meaningfulness and the hope  
which have emerged in the event of jesus,  
in the breaking of this bread,  
in the cooking of this rice,  
for the life of the world.

## 7

we remember jesus.  
we touch his brokenness. we touch the wounds in his hands,

his feet, his heart. and so we come to believe in life.  
 we touch the wounds of the people;  
 they are his hands and his heart: we touch them  
 so that we may believe in life and  
 in the resurrection of the oppressed.  
 the wounds of those who are pushed aside,  
 broken and left bleeding on the road-side of history.  
 the marginalised and deprived people denied rice and bread,  
 and land and honour, and speech.  
 them we touch and we cry, my god!

when you touched the least of these little ones  
 you touched me; and when you touched me  
 you touched god.

## 8

we remember jesus,  
 and the meals he loved to eat in the company of  
 the wounded, of social outcasts, and religious rejects.  
 we remember the bread over which jesus bent in love  
 and said:

this is me, this is myself,  
 this is my body  
 broken and given for you, for all.  
 eat this, eat me, live by the meaning of me.

## 9

we eat this bread (or is it rice he gives?)  
 in memory of Jesus.  
 we share this in commitment to his ways and his cause.  
 the cause of the reign of justice and equality  
 and freedom. we share the bread and eat out of  
 the same bowl in memory of the future jesus embodied  
 in his brokenness-for-others.

we share it and reach it to one another  
 as an anticipation of the future;  
 as a symbol of the new earth we have resolved to build;  
 as an education in equality, and a celebration of the  
 community which we choose to become  
 and which this bread and rice of  
 the memory of  
 the future enables us to create.

## 10

therefore, sisters and brothers,  
 look long at this symbol.

look at this mystery placed here on the table.  
 this loaf of bread, this bowl of rice, is our mystery;  
 the mystery of the earth, of working people,  
 the mystery of life, the mystery of god.

we take therefore and give to one another  
 that which we are and want to become,  
 namely, the body of jesus, the body of god,  
 the new earth, and our own authentic bodily self.

## 11

(communion: each one breaks bread, gives rice, to neighbour)

## 12

because the loaf of bread is one,  
 we, though many, are one body, for we all  
 partake of the one loaf.  
 a hundred, a thousand grains of rice  
 make a single bowl, and communism of life.

rice and bread are equality and unity;  
 they are solidarity in liberational praxis,  
 and in the hope of a new world, free and fresh.

## 13

we have worshipped you, god, with our food,  
 and our body, and hands reaching out and touching.

from now on, none of us will be defined  
 in isolation, in terms of what sets each apart  
 from the rest. nor in terms of what we already have  
 and hold in common; but in terms of  
 what we bring to one another,  
 and give to each other, and become together.  
 we shall be defined in terms of our for-other-ness,  
 our breadness and riceness.

## 14

so be it. amen. om. shalom. \*

samuel rayan

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\* This is a revised version of a text used in worship at the Second Asian Theological Conference (EATWOT) held in Hong Kong, August 1984.

# Note

## Parish Priests and the Mass 'Pro Populo' in the New Code

By Mass *pro populo* we understand the Mass that those "in the care of souls" are obliged to offer for the particular portion of God's People entrusted to them on all Sundays of the year and on certain other days stipulated by the Church Law. Speaking of this obligation in general, the Council of Trent in its 23rd session on the reform of the Curia, states expressly that "all those who are entrusted with the care of souls are obliged by divine precept to offer for them the holy sacrifice."

This obligation has consistently been understood in the Church as grave and binding in conscience as a question of justice. The Church law makes it concrete and attaches it to certain fixed days of the liturgical calendar. It is considered so important that—as c. 339 of the old Code expressly stated—lack of resources could not be adduced as a reason for a pastor to be excused from its fulfilment. Both the old and the new Code of Canon Law remind pastors that if, for whatever reason, one has not been able to fulfil this obligation on an allotted day, he has to make up for it by applying as many Masses as were omitted (1917 Code: cc. 339, 466; 1983 Code: cc. 388 § 4, 534 § 3).

Not much theological reflection is needed to discover the basis of such an obligation: it is simply based on the very office of pastor as it is understood in the Church, and is a concrete expression of the pastor's solicitude and charity towards his flock. In fact, what better service could he render to his people than offer, for their good, temporal or spiritual, that very "action" by which the divine Shepherd and Saviour accomplished the redemption of humanity and won for us the inestimable privilege of being called God's own children, sharing in his divine life and destined to share for all eternity in his divine bliss?

The new Code of Canon Law formulates this precept in the following terms: "When he has taken possession of his parish, the parish priest is bound on each Sunday and holyday of obligation in his diocese to apply the Mass for the people entrusted to him . . ." (c. 534 § 1).

Parish priests here have asked us whether they are bound by this particular prescription. The idea behind their query is that, though it stated this obligation incumbent on Bishops and parish priests in general, the old Code had another canon which reduced the obligation to only eleven Masses a year for pastors in mission lands—c. 306 to be taken together with c. 466 § 1. There is no such reduction in the new Code, hence the doubt arises in the mind of many as to whether the new Code abolishes what was granted by c. 306 of the old. This note deals with precisely this question, keeping in mind only our parish priests, not the higher pastors.

## The Old Code

**Common law:** Canon 439 of the 1917 Code, reproducing almost verbatim Pope Leo XIII's prescription in his Apostolic Letter *In suprema* of 10 June, 1882, states that the Bishops are bound to apply Mass for the people on all Sundays of the year and on feasts of obligation, including those suppressed. The same applies to the parish priests (c. 476 § 1).

**Mission law:** However given the peculiar situation obtaining in mission territories, the Code itself, as we have said above, reduced considerably the number of these Masses *pro populo* in favour of Vicars and Prefects Apostolic (c. 306) and of quasi-parish priests (c. 466 § 1): all these pastors were obliged to offer only eleven Masses as listed in c. 306.

This concession had in view the peculiar circumstances prevailing in most mission lands, where, as a rule, dioceses were not as yet erected. They were governed by Vicars and Prefects Apostolic. Similarly, there were there no parishes proper, but only mission stations, or the so-called "quasi-parishes," and consequently only "quasi-parish priests." Such a situation existed in the areas governed by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, established in 1622. Side by side, there were the territories cared for by what is known as the *Padroado* (Portuguese or Spanish) where regular dioceses and parishes were the rule.

However, as mission work went on progressing and the number of Christians increased everywhere in the territories subject to *Propaganda Fide*, it happened that even in these countries, dioceses proper came gradually to be established, side by side with Vicariates and Prefectures Apostolic. In a similar way, alongside mission stations and quasi-parishes, regular parishes sprang into existence, in which the care and attention of the priest in charge was given mostly to the large number of the baptized faithful, just as in the churches of Europe. Nor did these new dioceses and parishes, for that matter or automatically, fall out of the jurisdiction of *Propaganda*. The question therefore naturally came up: are these parish priests, in such mission areas still cared for by *Propaganda*, bound by c. 339 mentioned above (just as their counterparts in European countries), or could they continue to benefit by the concession made by the Code itself in c. 306 and go on offering no more than eleven Masses for their people, in spite of the fact that they were no more quasi-parish priests but parish priests proper?

The doubt was reasonable and it prompted the S. C. of *Propaganda* to issue a special decree to cover precisely this new development taking place in mission countries. On 9 December 1920 that Dicastery of the Roman Curia explicitly decreed that in mission lands under its jurisdiction the norms laid down in the Code for quasi-parishes would hold good for the parishes that had been, or would eventually come to be erected in those areas.<sup>1</sup>

1. *AS* 13 (1921), pp. 17-18. The reason given was that, in spite of this ecclesial development, these regions had not yet attained their full stature: "*cum aliquid inchoatum adhuc prae se ferunt.*"

An immediate practical and concrete application of this decree concerned precisely the matter under our consideration—the Masses “*pro populo*”. That is to say, this decree practically equiparated in this particular matter our parish priests in such mission lands to the quasi-parish priests mentioned in c. 466 § 1. Hence it is that the First Plenary Council of India held in Bangalore City in the year 1950 invoked this cannon in its legislation, basing itself precisely on the *Propaganda* decree of 9 December, 1920 (cf. art. 13 of the Council). This has therefore, been the current practice in places under *Propaganda Fide* up to now: our parish priests have been offering only eleven Masses for their people—that is, the number prescribed by the Code for quasi-parish priests.

### The New Code

The new Code, promulgated on 25 January 1983, speaks of the obligation of applying Masses *pro populo* in c. 388: “The diocesan Bishop must apply the Mass *pro populo* for the people entrusted to him on each Sunday and on each holyday of obligation in his region.” By cc. 381 § 2 and 368 this norm binds also the Vicars Apostolic and Prefects Apostolic, and by c. 534 § 1, as we have seen, the parish priests. In other words, there is no norm in the new Code corresponding to c. 306 and 446 of the old Code which, as we said, reduced the number of the Masses *pro populo* in mission areas. Hence the question: Are our parish priests in India bound by the norm laid down by c. 534 § 1 of the present Code or can they honestly and *tuta conscientia* go on offering only eleven Masses as hitherto?

Our answer is, Yes, they can. Our reasons for this opinion are briefly as follows:

Canon 6 of the new Code says that when it comes into force it automatically abrogates the previous 1917 Code and other laws, universal or particular, which are contrary to its provisions, unless the Code itself provides otherwise in respect to particular laws.

However, the decree by which parish priests in our country are entitled to offer only eleven Masses for their flock is not precisely a particular law, and consequently, it is *not abrogated* by the new Code. It is a *privilege* contrary to the norms of the 1917 Code, granted in 1920 by the competent authority and still in use when the new Code was promulgated. Nor has it been revoked anywhere in the present Code. Consequently, according to c. 4 of this same Code, it remains intact like any other privilege, and can be legitimately followed by our parish priests.

We are concerned here with what is of strict obligation. Each pastor is evidently free to celebrate more Masses for his flock, according to his possibilities. *Quod abundat non nocet*... —far from it.

Carlos M. DE MELO, S.J.

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# Correspondence

Dear Father,

Since the Second Vatican Council has done much to remove the very narrow-minded attitude towards other religions which had entered the Church in the wake of Caesaro-papism and colonialism, your paper does a very useful work by trying to explain the meaning of "Dialogue and Mission". I am much disappointed to note that what Fr Amaladoss S.J. writes about "Dialogue and Mission" in your February issue seems to render mission meaningless and dialogue impossible.

Mission or evangelizing non-Christians and bringing the Good News to them is meaningless if people have no obligation to find out which is the true religion. But this is precisely the foundation on which Fr Amaladoss seems to build his theory of mission: "The world is not a super-market of religions where one can shop around for the best one" (p. 66).

Inter-religious dialogue supposes that adherents of different religions can speak in an objective language, i.e. in a language that is intelligible to others, about religious experience and the truth they see in revelation. Fr Amaladoss bases his theory of dialogue on the assumption that we cannot speak about our faith or religious experience "objectively", "that is to say in a way acceptable to someone else who does not share our faith" (p. 67).

Could not your paper try to give a more intelligent, or intelligible or reasonable view of dialogue and mission?

Dnyanamata  
Sangamner 422605

Yours sincerely,  
H. STAFFNER, S.J.

Dear Fr Amaladoss,

I much appreciated your article "Dialogue and Mission," which I've just read. I found it very satisfying and it clarified several points, as well as clearly pointing out where the true mystery still persists.

I was specially interested in what you wrote on Proclamation, and liked it. I think we need also to be aware that for many, and deeper down, "conversion" is not joining a Church, but an encounter with a Person, Jesus. The actual process of authentic conversion seems to be some kind of psycho-spiritual experience that is really meta-"theological." Such a person is taken over by Christ. His joy and freedom are tangible. Human frailties continue to exist, but he experiences not just "good news" etc., but true life—and with that goes a real kind of sharing in Christ's *kenosis*. This experience, I feel, relativizes for him all theological theorizing, even "inculturation" and "dialogue"!

One part of this is a great urge to share this Christ with his fellow human beings. I do not think such a "convert" is actually trying to "save" others, or belittle other religions; but his desire to share his new life is very real. Also he does generally seem much less interested in dialogue and inculturation than I (his "older" Christian companion) feel is good. He is however often very ready to die for Christ—even literally, which I presume is true ingredient of "discipleship." To what extent should I channelize him with preconceived theological and ecclesiastical patterns remains a problem for me. Some may experience this more, some much less, some for a long period, some shorter—but its reality, I feel, need to be included in any discussion on proclamation.

Once again, many thanks, Amal.

c/o Catholic Ashram,  
Hazaribagh.

Hans Hendriks, S.J.

# Book Reviews

## Sacred Scripture

*We review here a number of books of the series Old Testament Guides, published by JSOT, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, England. Our comments are intended to guide others in their choice of books (among so many available), to indicate the type of readers for whom these guides would be useful and give information about the content and quality. We do not enter into a critical discussion of positions taken on particular questions and problems or the interpretation of the text.*

**The Second Isaiah.** By R.N. WHYBRAY. 1983. Pp. xiv-84. £ 2.95.

The author is the editor of the series and has worked for nearly 20 years on Isaiah and wrote the commentary in the New Century Bible (1973). This introduction is divided into 5 chapters. The author situates Deutero-Isaiah within the whole of Isaiah and describes the historical background to Is 40-55 in two brief chapters. The prophet's mission is situated both within the prophetic tradition and the circumstances of the Exile.

In the major part of the book the author offers essential information and guidance for study with clarity, good judgement and evidence of his mastery of this field. Is 40-55 is basically a collection of diverse types of oracles—speech forms of the culture of the time. Whybray studies these types of oracles, the particular way this prophet uses them, and guides the reader to interpret such literary forms. In this longer chapter (pp. 20-42) many aspects of the content of the book are covered and wise comments are made about form-criticism and the composition of the book.

The final chapter (pp. 43-82) analyses the message of the book in detail and in an informative and orderly manner. This includes a study of the question of the Servant and Servant Songs. At the end of each chapter a short bibliography of mainly English books and articles is given. There is a subject and author

index. This is an excellent guide and as Is 44-55 is the basic OT reading for Advent it is highly recommended to university level lay Christians, to all seminarians, formation personnel and priests.

Joh. By J.H. EASTON. 1986. Pp xii-68. £2.95/ \$ 3.95.

The aim of this guide is to "assist the careful and the appreciative reading of Job" (vii). The book achieves its aim. The first chapter is to be read together with the actual text as it guides the unfamiliar reader through the text. Having experienced the book as a whole, the author discusses informatively a number of questions. He approaches the problem of the structure of Job from the point of view of its growth and the incorporation of various traditions. He advances some tentative suggestions about the audience. The study of the crucial question of the theme of the parts and the whole is well done, though more space could have been given to the diverse answers to this difficult question. He concludes: "The author's theme thus carries him into the heart of religion, into the heart indeed of all human experience which wrestles with the contradictions of hope and despair, light and darkness, creation and chaos. He follows his theme through with rare insight, sensitivity and originality, yielding a treatment which can scarcely be surpassed" (51).

An interesting chapter is devoted to a selection of texts from ancient wisdom literature in the middle Eastern world and also an Indian wisdom text, the Markandeya Purana, Cantos VII-VIII, where themes similar to the concerns of Job are found. The author does not wish to suggest or try to discover sources for Job but rather to introduce the reader to the search of the human spirit over centuries grappling with the questions of evil, injustice, suffering and the Divine.

In a final brief section Easton gives some information to understand the poetic quality of Job and suggests possibilities for the place of origin and the

date of the book. I would have liked a longer discussion of the rhetorical-poetic character of the book and of wisdom literature itself. Relevant bibliographic material guides students for further study and a brief survey of the landmarks in the approach to Job introduces them to the history of research. The guide adequately fulfills the aim of the series.

**Judges.** By A.D.H. MAYES, 1985. Pp. 98. £ 2.95 / \$ 3.95.

This guide is divided into three chapters with a pertinent bibliography added to each. In the opening chapter the author introduces the book of Judges itself. He gives a detailed outline, with apt comments, of the actual structure and content of the book (pp. 13-31), as well as brief information about the type of history found in Judges, its deuteronomical context, and the history of the way the book came into existence. These 34 pages will be utterly new to anyone who has not already read some well informed introduction to the OT and has been accustomed to read Judges as "history".

The following chapters build on the opening part and provide much valuable introductory information on the social and historical background for this period of Israel's history, which is reflected and interpreted in Judges. The basic questions the author raises, discusses and to which he provides answers, which reflect more common present scholarly opinion, concern the socio-economic-political structure of the Israelite society in the pre-monarchic period and the specific character of this society in the period of the Judges, and finally the relationship between this society and the monarchic society permanently established by David.

Using the scant ancient source material available, the author describes the character of the Canaanite City States. The social structure was strictly hierarchical (King-nobles and military on top), with an increasingly impoverished subject population in the cities and villages. The village as a unit was more important from a fiscal and legal point of view than the family, and Canaanite religion reflected the social structure. Contrasted with this 'urban' society was the family-clan ('Tribal') rural society of the people who were to become Israel, dwelling mainly in the hilly areas. The author indicates the reasons to reject the existence at this

period of a real Tribal society of twelve tribes, the theory of Israel's evolution from a nomadic to a semi-nomadic mode of life, and Noth's famous theory of the Amphictyony. He insists on a *kinship*-based largely agricultural, loosely tribal, society where the family and clan were the units and in which the Father was the centre of authority.

The final chapter describes the structure of Israel's society in that period which the book of Judges covers. The author correctly insists on the fact that the society was fundamentally segmentary. A united Israel with a common tribal structure did not exist. The leadership basically belonged to the father of the family. At moments of crisis clan groups (extended families) united under various ad hoc leaders and heroes, the deliverers. The author indicates how the concerns of monarchical Israel influenced both the way the succession of Judges is described and their roles. He shows how disparate traditions are gathered and related. Finally, he outlines the history of Israel in this period and indicates the factors which enabled David and not Saul, the last of the ad hoc heroes, to impose a monarchic structure upon the 'Tribal' society of the Israelite people.

This guide can be a valuable education to so many Christians, including priests, who are unaware of the development in OT studies of the period of the Exodus-Entrance into the Land, and the period prior to the monarchy. The social and historical issues discussed are complex and so this guide is more demanding than the guides to Isaiah and Job. The only lacuna in my mind is the lack of sufficient attention to the religious meaning and significance of this book in itself and within the OT as a whole. However, the quality of the information given assures the value of this book.

**1 & 2 Samuel.** By R.P. GORDON. 1984. Pp-97. £ 2.95.

This guide is the adaptation of an intended introduction to a commentary as yet unpublished. The author refers to these two books as a "colourful literary, theological and historical montage" in which three possibly independent major narratives, *The Ark Narrative* (1 Sam 4-6, 2 Sam 6), *The History of David's Rise* (1 Sam 16, 2 Sam 5) and *The Succession Narrative* (2 Sam 9-20, 1 Kg 1-2) are interspersed with other narrative pieces related to traditions about Shiloh (1 Sam

1-3), the commencement of the Monarchy (1 Sam 7-12), the reigns of Saul (1 Sam 13-15) and David (cf 2 Sam 21-24), and the important Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7).

The chapters in the guide follow these divisions based on the source and tradition-history hypotheses about the origins of the books. There is an initial chapter on the Deuteronomistic History of which 1 and 2 Samuel form a part. Each chapter is followed by an adequate contemporary bibliography predominantly of English language entries.

The guide requires more sophisticated prior knowledge of the historical critical method and its aims and a present interest in the various scholarly hypotheses about sources, traditions and history.

The book is a fine introduction to the state of contemporary study of the major supposedly independent narrative traditions, their origins, growth and redactional incorporation into the books, and the historical background of the period in question. The theological themes of each section are treated and pertinent problems raised related to the historical critical approach to the text of the OT. The books of Samuel are important for Israel's reflections on the monarchy, the crucial fate of Saul, the reign of David, the basic covenant with the Davidic Dynasty and that crucial transition from a "Tribal" to a monarchical society.

We judge that much more space could have been given to the final form of the text, and the theological themes of the whole and parts needed more detailed treatment. The two books could also have been placed within Israel's larger religious self-understanding. This guide is less satisfactory because of the over-emphasis on the historical critical questions. However, the material given is of very high quality and most useful.

**The Fate of King Saul. An Interpretation of a Biblical Story.** By David M. GUNN. 1980. Pp. 181. £ 7.50.

This literary and theological study of the story of Saul in 1 Sam 8-2 Sam 2, is related to and partially complementary of *1 & 2 Samuel*. At the beginning Gunn discusses his method briefly. The preponderant emphasis is given to the coherence and flow of the final form of the text, with its diverse and competing perspectives and value systems. He studies the narrative from a literary and theological perspective and justifies the atten-

tion given to the final text form, and his more humanistic than scientific (historical-critical) approach. He sees the story of Saul as serious entertainment (Matthew Arnold) both from a theological-moral and a literary point of view. The major question which arises is how to explain the rejection of Saul. Was it his disobedience, his fate, a tragic flaw in his personality, or some strange decision of God, unwilling to accept monarchy or Saul's repentance? Is Saul the innocent victim of God?

The body of the study is divided into three parts. In part one Gunn sets the scene. He prefaces the study of Saul's failure, as narrated in 1 Samuel 13 and 15, and the ambiguity rising from these chapters, by a useful survey of the typical negative assessment of Saul among scholars and preachers, and yet the abiding sense among some that there is more here than just the story of a bad man.

In the second part the whole story of Saul is studied in detail, in a literary and exegetical manner, in three chapters divided according to the story as narrated in 1 Sam 8-15, 1 Sam 16-23 and 1 Sam 24-2 Sam 2 (pp. 59-112).

The study concludes in part three. Its single chapter is entitled, "Reflections: Saul and Yahweh." This chapter is prefaced with a quotation from Hosea 13: 11 "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." Here the two protagonists meet. We shall give Gunn's response to the question about the cause of Saul's fall and rejection. "From the moment of his anointing the future is loaded against him (in the form of the fatally ambiguous instruction of 10:8) and from his establishment as King in chapter 11 it is as though fate has become his active antagonist, thwarting and twisting his every move. (In this respect he is remarkably like King Oedipus.) We have looked closely at the key chapters, 11 and 15, and seen that his rejection by God and the prophet appears, at the most, to be calculated and contrived and, at least, to reflect a remarkable readiness on their part to find against him. From then on he plays out an unequal match with David. Yet the demands made upon him and the obstacles placed in his path are conspicuous by their absence from David's experience. David is given a free hand and can do no wrong in the eyes of God, even when his action (for example in his visit to Nob) appears no 'better' (cf. 15:28) than those fatal actions of Saul at Gilgal.

David is 'a man after (Yahweh's) own heart' (13:14). Whatever precisely that phrase means, the context makes abundantly clear that David is a *favourite* of Yahweh. Saul, on the other hand, appears as a victim. For David, Yahweh is 'Providence'; for Saul, Yahweh is 'Fate'. The mainspring of Saul's failure, then, is depicted as the outworking of fate—fate which is in some hidden way the reflection of the will of Yahweh . . ." (115-116).

Gunn neither absolves Saul nor Yahweh. He describes the function of Saul's jealousy and his "knowledge" of his rejection in his tragic failure. However, the fate of Saul forces him to look at Yahweh, and attempt to explain Yahweh's decision and action. Maybe he overemphasizes the negative aspect of God's action, yet the rejection of Saul does remain a teasing, at the least, and also for many a troubling problem, which throws a shadow on Yahweh in Saul's life story.

The notes to each chapter are gathered together at the end (pp. 135-160) followed by an extensive bibliography (pp. 161-165) and three useful indices of authors, subjects and passages from Samuel. The presentation is excellent. At various junctures in the study the author relates the Saul story to Sophocles' King Oedipus, Shakespeare's Macbeth/Othello and Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles. This highlights the literary character of his approach. The book is worth reading both because of the richness of the method employed in the study of a biblical narrative and the honesty of the author face to face with the problem of the God who rejects Saul, yet pardons worse kings.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

### Christian History & Biography

"Chresis". Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der Antiken Kultur. Band 1: Der Begriff des "rechten Gebrauchs". Von Christian GNILKA. Basel/Stuttgart, Schwabe und Co AG Verlag, 1984. Pp. 151. Paper. SFr. 26.—/DM 30.—

The inner transformation of the varied, rich and mature culture of the Graeco-Roman antiquity through Christian presence was a unique phenomenon.

Few will dispute its abiding significance for an understanding not only of Western civilization but also of the ongoing meeting of the Christian faith with the ancient cultures of Asia. That transformation can be viewed as an intellectual and cultural "macromutation". It indeed left many pre-Christian forms and ideas intact, yet placed them into a new "magnetic field" as it were, and under the impact of a new element, a new meaning emerged, all the others.

One of the key questions in the history of ideas would seem to be this: "When entering the culture of antiquity did the Christian faith preserve its own identity or did it increasingly lose it?" Or, put differently: "Did the road chosen by St Paul in his speech on the Areopagus and later by Justin and many other Fathers, lead towards a falsification of the Gospel by selling it to the categories of the Graeco-Roman world of thought? Was it a falsification implying a detrimental syncretism and thus a falling away from the pristine faith of the gospels?"

Gnilka's sober philosophical enquiry starts from the conviction that this process of transformation, stretching over centuries, was not simply the result of the play of anonymous and blind social, economic and political forces but was essentially, guided by the clear ideas and precise terminology of a theological philosophical elite which was aware of the magnitude of the encounter and tried to shape it with "the diacritical energy of its faith." (J. Dormann in the Preface, p. 9).

The author makes no secret of his admiration for the profound insights and brilliant formulations of Cardinal John Henry Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1945). It is the spirit of Newman that he has come to see the need for replacing the word and at times even misleading concept commonly used in describing the cultural mutation, such as, e.g., accommodative adaptation, transformation, fusion, filtration, reception, dependence and so on. He deems it crucial to discover within the relevant text how those men who were active in such a transformation described themselves and termed their task. The late Indologist P. Hacker, with a vivid interest in theology and especially missiology, had thought that the Christianisation of the Greco-Roman World during the first Christian centuries provided the model of a great, succe-

ful mission. Hence he had studied the attitudes the Christian thinkers adopted towards the values of the culture of antiquity, especially pagan philosophy and religion, in order to learn from them, not least as a service to the Church in modern India. It was Hacker who first noted in this context the use by the Fathers of the Church of the term *chrestat*, *chrestis/utt*, *usus* and proposed that this concept should be considered a valuable hermeneutical instrument in analysing patristic texts describing the process of transformation. The present study is the fruit of following this clue and programme.

Thoroughly researched and lucidly formulated, the enquiry elucidates the use and exact meaning of the term "right use" throughout the history of in Graeco-Roman culture, from the Sophists to the late Church Fathers and the early Middle Ages. The final parts of the study offer a fascinating inquiry into "the work of the bees" as an image of "proper use" and a discussion of the metamorphosis of culture that results from "the proper use."

What, in short, is the main lesson of this enquiry? From the pre-Christian philosophical reflection the Fathers of the Church adopted the concept of "proper use". This implies the imperative to subjugate human action in all areas of life to a supreme value. It is a concept of intellectual strength. "To use" is, as it were, an imperial act. As there is the question of a right and proper use, so there is also the question of an unjust, wrong and improper use. To use correctly always means to choose, to distinguish, to be carefully attentive, to respect the objective reality and hold fast to it. The right use decides on the value things may have for man but it also decides the question about the happiness and unhappiness of man. The Fathers operate with this concept as a useful instrument. The present study shows that the theological thinkers then were fully aware of the problem of dealing with non-Christian culture(s) as Christians. Their aim was, in the face of changing circumstances, to continue the task of using its elements critically and discerningly, in the tradition of St Paul's basic approach and outlook. The Fathers challenge us to evaluate their achievement by their own terminology. Hence the concrete study and description of how, in detail, the Fathers practiced *chrestis* will

be taken up in the subsequent planned volumes. Gnlika sees it the task of a discriminating philosophical interpretation to lay open and critically examine all the textual evidence.

From the angle of the present-day Church in Asia which in many ways is called to patiently unearth and critically "use" the treasures of the non-Christian Indian traditions this approach to patristic studies would seem to be meaningful and provide a challenge to reenact in a new form the unique missionary model provided by the earliest history of Christian faith, theology and pastoral praxis.

Indices of biblical citations and of names and subjects as well as glossaries of the Greek and Latin terms employed, translated and explained, conclude this valuable study. An alphabetical list of the literature quoted is strangely missing.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

*Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan. Vol. I: From His Appointment as Visitor until his First Departure from Japan (1573-1582). Part II: The Solution (1580-1582).* By Josef Franz SCHUTTE, S.J. Translated by John J. Coyne S.J. *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1985. Pp. xx-380. Rs 35, \$ 10 (pa); Rs 40 \$ 12 (cl).

I reviewed the first part of volume I in this Journal (1980, pp. 250-1). Therefore I will only summarize the contents of part II, and make some short comments.

The book is divided into five chapters. It is exclusively focussed on the work done in Japan by Valignano, with other Jesuits, during the years 1580-2, which were, in a sense, the heyday of church development in the Empire of the Rising Sun. In many ways Bungo was the centre of the great visitor's activities, as well as one of the centres of the Jesuit mission.

Much of Valignano's work was devoted to what we call today "inculturation." Many important decisions were taken, nearly always in consultation with the missionaries, concerning identification with the Japanese ways of life. Those decisions embraced almost everything, from the garb to be adopted to food-habits, the tea ceremony, Japanese social relations, etc. In that period the vice-province of Japan was set up and a bishopric for Japan was decided upon.

The second part of the last chapter is devoted to a review of the biography

of St Francis Xavier found in part I of Valignano's "History of India." In many ways the saint appeared as the model of all Jesuit missionaries, including Valignano himself.

This is rather an entrancing story of the efforts made to assimilate the many aspects of Japanese ways of life. Not all Jesuits were then and there in favour of a thorough identification. Some rather regarded it with unfavourable eyes. Yet the final result of many discussions (they can hardly be called sessions of discernment...) was that the principle of cultural integration prevailed, though perhaps not as much as we would wish today. At any rate, we can understand better why in 1582 and 1583 Ricci could already think of inculturation in China, since it was already an accepted policy in Japan, though the latter regarded China and its culture as the main source of its own. Inculturation was also all the easier for Ricci because the newly established Vice-Province of Japan had China under its wings.

E.R. HAMBYE, S.J.

**History of Christianity in India. Volume I: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century (up to 1542).** By A. Mathias MUNDADAN C.M.I., Ph.D. Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1984. Pp. xxii-567. Rs 60.

I reviewed Vol. II of this new History of Christianity in India in VIDYAJYOTI (1984) p. 467. Volume I came out rather late, since it was officially released in Bombay in February 1985 by the then Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, Dr Gore. Printing difficulties had delayed the publication of the volume and it was with a sigh of relief that we saw it off the press.

The rationale presiding over the composition of the volumes of this history is found applied thoroughly in this volume, within the necessary limits imposed by the rather scanty documentation available until we reach the end of the 15th century.

As could be expected the volume is clearly divided into three parts: (a) the origins of Indian Christians, with the Thomistic traditions thoroughly examined under all its facets; (b) the later development, relations with the East-Syrian (Chaldaean) Church, and the short-lived Latin medieval missions; (c) the new missionary era, starting under Portuguese

aegis with its evolution until the eve of Francis Xavier's arrival.

The author, who is professor of Church History and Theology at Dharmaram College, Bangalore, is particularly well qualified to deal with all those subjects. He had written two major books, the first in 1967 entitled *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christian under Mar Jacob, 1498-1552*, and the second in 1970, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St Thomas Christians*. He is thoroughly conversant with both Eastern and Western sources.

The last chapter, the tenth, should be read with great attention. It is entitled "General Observations and Conclusion." Not only does it gather in one sweep the fundamental contents of the book, but adds a lot of pertinent remarks.

After such a nearly exhaustive treatment of ancient, medieval, and early modern Christianity in India, one cannot write on those periods without referring to Fr Mundadan's new achievement.

E.R. HAMBYE, S.J.

**The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. The Dutch Period. Volume III: 1747-1795.** Original Documents translated into English by V. PERNIOLA, S.J., Dehiwala, Tisara Prakashakaya Ltd (The Ceylon Historical Journal). Monograph Series, Volume Eleven, 1985. Pp. xxxvi-546.

In 1984 I already reviewed Vol. I (p. 111) and Vol. II (pp. 422-3). This Volume III takes us until the end of the Dutch domination over the emerald island.

As far as Catholics were concerned, the state of persecution launched by the Dutch since they invaded and conquered Sri Lanka, and maintained with ever renewed vigour, became less active, particularly after 1762. Actually, a few years after that date the Dutch government showed an increasing tolerance. Meanwhile its Christian counterparts, the Calvinist ministers and their Consistories, ceaselessly reminded those lay officials that they were bound in conscience at least to limit Catholic activities. But the secularism of the 18th century did effect a change for the better, i.e., for more religious tolerance.

As Fr Perniola notes in his introduction (p. xiii): "The Catholics had gradually increased in number over the years"; they became bolder and sometimes

"harried and humiliated the preachers of the Reformed Faith." Let us not expect ecumenical sentiments in those days and under such situations. . .

The collection of sources follows closely the approach adopted in the previous volumes. Much comes from the Oratorian side, since these Goan Fathers still remained the only Catholic apostles of the island. But, according to the sources consulted by the learned author, other priests turned up on the island, though, it seems, for some time only.

The volume is made more useful by a glossary of place names, providing the present spelling of most of them (pp. xvii-xxiii), a glossary of foreign words (pp. xxiii-zxvi), a list of the Dutch governors 1743-96 (p. xxiv), a list of known Oratorians between 1747 and 1795, and finally a list of the superiors of the Oratorians and vicars general of the Mission of Ceylon (pp. xxxv-xxxvi).

The example given by Fr Perniola should be followed in India also, though here the distribution of documents should be made according to regions.

E.R. HAMBYE, S.J.

**The Missionaries of St Francis de Sales of Annecy.** By Francis MOGET, MSFS. *Vinayalaya, Bangalore, S.F.S. Publications*, 1985. Pp. xv-320. (Distributors: Asian Trading Corporation, 150 Brigade Rd, B'lore 560029).

St Francis de Sales did not found any male congregation. His spirit, however, kept brooding over his episcopal town, Annecy, and in many a heart which wanted to imbibe the Salesian spirituality.

It should not be forgotten that Savoy, of which Annecy was part and parcel, remained independent from the rest of France till 1860, when the king of Italy gave it to Emperor Napoleon III in gratitude for the military backing provided by the latter in the Austrian-Italian war. When Father Peter Mary Mermier, born in a village not far from Annecy, took the momentous decision of launching a congregation of missionaries around 1834, Savoy was still the French-speaking part of the duchy of Savoy, which was then one of the components of the kingdom of Sardinia.

Mermier was strongly supported and helped by the new bishop of Annecy, Peter Joseph Rey, who took charge in 1832. The new society, soon a congrega-

tion, began as a mission band. Already in May 1845 four priests left for India as missionaries, more precisely for Vizagapatnam. This was the beginning of the great developments of later years, which extended the congregation to what was then called the Central Provinces, with Nagpur as headquarters.

The first sisters to arrive in India in October 1849 were those of St Joseph of Annecy. Later the Holy Cross sisters of Chavanod also came to India. They regard Fr Maurice Clavel, the third superior general of the Missionaries, as their second founder.

Meanwhile in Savoy the congregation was expanding. It continued to do mission work, but also opened high schools and launched associations both for priests and for women, who wanted to be led by St Francis de Sales' spirituality. In 1861 the Missionaries undertook apostolic work in England. They went to Brazil in December 1926, and at the beginning of 1970 two MSFS priests went from England to Atlanta in the USA.

Despite the suppression of religious congregations by the anticlerical government in France in 1903, the congregation, like many others, not only survived but flourished in Switzerland, India and England. The MSFS came back to Annecy in 1921, never again to be chased away from there. Now the congregation has several provinces, above all, that of India which makes up the majority of the members of the MSFS. This province, if I am not mistaken, is now divided into two.

From the viewpoint of mission history in 19th-20th century India the work of Fr Moget is very useful indeed. It does not go very deeply into that subject, since the author's aim is basically to provide the MSFS themselves and their friends with a history of their predecessors. It remains, however, a good introduction to such a history.

E.R. HAMBYE, S.J.

**Jesus: Way, Truth, Life. The Spirituality of Father James Alberione.** By Rev. George KATHOLIL, S.S.P., S.T.D. Boston, St Paul Editions, 1985. Pp. 328, \$ 6 (pa); \$ 7 (cl).

For the last thirty-five years or so the Fathers, Brothers and Daughters of St Paul have spread in many places in India. One can understand why one of its priests



thought it right to study the spirituality of the founder of the Society of St Paul, to which he belongs. That was all the more important as most of Alberione's writings are in Italian, and an English study of them was badly needed.

James Alberione was born in North Italy in 1884 and founded the Society of St Paul in 1914. He began as a diocesan priest, ordained in 1907 for the diocese of Alba. Seven years later he set up a typographical school. This was the cradle of all the religious foundations of later days which would be basically devoted to the apostolate of the press, as they still are today.

Alberione had early realized that this was the need of the day, especially in the early part of this century in Italy. He took St Paul as his patron, as the model of the preacher and propagandist of the good news. Like most great Christian founders Alberione focussed on Christ as the inspiration, the supreme model, and the source of a dedicated life. Almost throughout his life (he died in 1971) he insisted upon seeing Christ as the Christ of St John's Gospel, as the Truth, the Way and the Life. With this vision a Paulist can participate more fully and more intensely in the divine life.

The author studies in all its details the spiritual evolution of Alberione's life, as a man of God and as the founder and inspirer of his sons and daughters. There is no doubt that Alberione had come under the influence of various spiritual authors of the past, such as St Ignatius of Loyola, Bl. Julien Eymard, etc., yet he did not cease to keep his own personal approach to union with the Lord. He was very much an Eucharist-centred man, and he insisted not only on spreading editions of the Gospels at low prices, but also on being evangelical as much as humanly feasible.

An inspiring and useful book, well-written and well published, though the author has kept the thesis format. The bibliography is extensive and five appendices are added.

E.R. HAMBYE, S.J.

## Nicaragua

**Blood of the Innocent. Victims of the Contras' War in Nicaragua.** By Teofilo CABESTRERO. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1985. Pp. viii-104. \$ 6.95.

This book is a blood-chilling account, by an author who visited the worst affected areas of Nicaragua, of the criminal attacks and outrages on the free citizens of the country now ravaged by the "Contras", i.e., the counter-revolutionary forces openly financed and supported by the United States. The details that constitute the book have been gathered from the people who were seized, tortured, mutilated, raped, orphaned or abducted to Honduras by the Contras. Some of those who were not murdered, unfortunate victims of the misguided and strong-arm policies of the United States, have at great risk to their own lives, narrated their bitter experiences in order that the guilty may be exposed and justice sought from the conscience of the international community.

The book consists of five parts which describe various types of atrocities committed against the Nicaraguans, especially those living close to the Honduras border. The author visited Ocotal, Esteli, Somotillo, cities bordering on Honduras, the hide-out of the Contras from which they launch their criminal attacks on the Nicaraguans. First hand information was obtained from the people affected by these attacks. The last chapter consists of the testimony of an American priest and an American nun.

The purpose of the narration seems to be to highlight the incongruity of the whole situation. A sovereign state, fresh from the tyrannical clutches of the dictatorial, oppressive and exploitative dynastic rule of Somoza, is subject to attacks from within and without. The sovereignty of the state and of the people is violated by the pretensions of the Contras who are puppets in the hands of the United States. Moreover, religion is abused and exploited in so far as these attacks are attributed to the "cause of religion" and freedom. Simple in style, powerful in what it says, the work is more than a book—it is a call to the international community by a helpless people struggling to preserve their freedom and to obtain justice as a sovereign state.

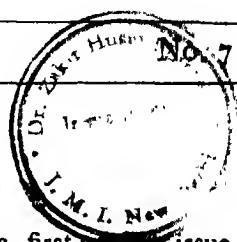
T.K. JOHN, S.J.

# Vidyajyoti

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### In This Issue

Exactly one year ago VIDYAJYOTI published a first special issue on Liberation Theology as a reflection on the first document of the S. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the topic published in 1984. A second special issue followed in November 1985. This third special issue, occasioned by the second document of the SCDF, focuses its attention on Asia where a specific variety of Liberation Theology is growing.

The Sri Lankan theologian Fr Aloysius PIERIS, well-known to our readers, in a paper originally read at the 5th International Theological Symposium held at the Sophia University, Tokyo, in late 1985, shows that Liberation Theology adds a specific popular and biblical dimension to the liberation trends found in the great religious traditions of Rome and Asia, between which he discovers striking parallels.

Fr Samuel RAYAN of Vidyajyoti offers us a talk originally delivered at the 2nd Asian Justice and Peace Consultation held in Hong Kong in 1982. The paper was originally printed in *Info* of the Office for Human Development in Manila, April 1984. In this talk Fr Rayan analyses five different attitudes to poverty and oppression found among Christians and gives concrete suggestions for the commitment of the Asian Church to the poor.

We are happy to include in the issue a reaction of the well-known novelist and critic Ms Nayantara SAHGAL to the latest document of the SCDF. Her perceptive analysis and her call for a liberation theology within Hinduism point towards a future fruitful dialogue between the various religions of India, once they are all "converted" to an authentic commitment to a just social order.

Fr Kurien KUNNUMPURAM of the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, gives us a detailed analysis and a critical evaluation of the new document from the SCDF on "Freedom and Liberation."

# A Theology of Liberation in Asian Churches?

Aloysius PIERIS, S.J.

## 1. *The Valid Theology and the Local Church: The Dilemma of Asian Catholics*

The Roman Instruction on Liberation Theology upholds, on biblical grounds, that the phrase "Theology of Liberation" is "thoroughly valid".<sup>1</sup> Liberation—if one may interpret the Roman Document—is the contemporary equivalent of the classical theological formula, *economia salutis* (the order of redemption) which is the aspiration of all humans, and the intended goal of all religions. So understood, liberation is the *sole* concern of Christ and His Church. Now, theology is none other than the attempt on the part of the Church to spell out this concern in theory and practice, as the Ratzinger Document seems to suggest.<sup>2</sup> Does this not mean that the phrase "Theology of Liberation" is biblically valid because it is tautological, as there cannot be a non-liberational theology? For is it not 'liberation' that ultimately determines the validity of any theology? Hence a good starting point in our discussion is to agree on the sign by which a 'valid' theology is recognized: namely that theology is valid if it *originates, develops and culminates* in the praxis/process of liberation.

This argument implies another more significant truth not mentioned in the Roman Instruction, namely, that the same praxis of liberation which makes a theology valid, also creates the indigeneous identity of the local church which co-originates with that theology. The genesis of a liberation theology overlaps with the genesis of an authentically local church. That is to say, any liberation theology begins to be formulated only when a given Christian community begins to be drawn into the local peoples' struggle for *full humanity* and through that struggle begins to sink its roots in the lives and cultures of these people most of whom, in our continent, happen

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1. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'*, Vatican City, 1984, 111/4. It is to this source that we refer to, when we use such titles as 'the Roman Document', 'The Roman Instruction', 'the Instruction', 'the Ratzinger Document', etc.

2. *Ibid.*

to be non-Christians. This is why we insist that inculturation and liberation, rightly understood, are two names for the same process!

It is an ecclesiological heresy, therefore, to suppose that a church becomes Asianized when the white faces in the Asian episcopate become gradually replaced by black, brown and yellow ones! An indigenous clergy is not necessarily a sign of an indigenous church! What does make our Christian communities truly indigenous or 'local' is our active and risky involvement with Asia's cultural history which is now being shaped by its largely non-Christian peoples. Thus, a valid theology of liberation in Asia is born first as a *formula of life* reflecting an ecclesial praxis of liberation which is continually internalized by being symbolically enacted in the liturgy before it is shaped gradually into a *confessional formula*.

This process is now taking place germinally in the "basic human communities" (with Christian and non-Christian membership) which are emerging in the periphery of the official churches. Therein, the authentically 'local' churches of Asia and the 'valid' Asian theologies of liberation have already been conceived as twins in the same womb of praxis.

This observation is not true of the official churches; and so we cannot claim to possess officially any *valid* Asian theology of liberation precisely because the majority of the local churches in Asia are not yet local churches of Asia, but are the extensions of Euro-American local churches in Asia. That is why we Catholics who are no more than members of the Asian branch of Rome, have no official theology except the *local theology of the local church of Rome*.

By this last phrase, I certainly do not mean the content of the dogmas of the Roman Communion, but the theological idiom that Rome has evolved from its Christian beginnings; the conceptual framework which supports the practical wisdom, theoretical norms and the pastoral directives emanating from the policy-makers of the Roman church—such being the Ratzinger Document on liberation theology and all forms of theologizing that goes on within that scheme in the Western patriarchate.

This Roman theology, we readily grant, is a *valid* theology, that is to say, a 'liberation theology' in its own right. It has, from its inception, spelt out the *What* and the *How* of liberation (= redemption = salvation = coming of the kingdom, etc.) in terms of a distinctively Roman experience. This is how any theology is born.

In this regard, however, we are compelled to make a strange observation: The Catholics in the *non-Semitic cultures of Asia* are bound to experience a connaturality, an inner affinity and a profound empathy *vis-à-vis* the Roman experience of 'liberation' and the Roman articulation of that experience (as will be demonstrated in part 2). Hence there is a strong possibility that even the 'indigenized' churches of the future, at least in the non-semitic sector of Asia, would continue to uphold an Asian version of the Roman perception of liberation.

There are at least two reasons for saying this.

The first reason has already been alluded to: we Asian Catholics have been moulded in heart and mind, in doctrine and worship, by the local theology of Rome for four centuries and more. We have known no other theology since the time we began to breathe as Catholics. It has therefore become *our* sacrosanct tradition, *our* authoritative past, *our* norm of orthodoxy.

The second reason is more important and forms the backbone of the thesis we present here. The gnostic or non-Semitic *religions of Asia* such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Taoism which permeate the popular religiosity and the local cultures of South, South-East and Far-Eastern Asia, seem to concur with the Roman view of liberation. Thus, if the Asian churches seek to be 'inculturated' in and through the religiousness of Asia in the Southern and Eastern regions, then the Roman view of liberation will continue to be upheld *in toto* as it has always been in the past.

It is therefore our duty to persuade theologians and church leaders not to ignore the following two important facts: the one relating to Asian reality, the other directly pertaining to Asian theology.

As regards the first, we should remember that Asian reality cannot be reduced to the great religions, specially to their higher (meta-cosmic) forms, notwithstanding their decisive influence in our continent. We must pay equal attention to the (cosmic) *religiousness of Asia's poor*, which has its own dynamics (see part 5 below). Moreover we repeat here what we have always held, namely, that the Asian Reality is an interplay of *Religiousness and Poverty*.<sup>3</sup> Both

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3. E.g., see A. PIERIS, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation; Some Religio-Cultural Guide-Lines", *The Month* 240 (1979), 148-159; *Vidyajyoti*, 43 (1979), 261-284.

elements have to be taken in their inter-relationship. Hence the liberation of the Poor, their psycho-spiritual and socio-political emancipation from that which keeps them poor, is one essential concern in an Asian theology. Therefore, the indigenization of the Asian church can never take place if only one sector of the reality, i. e., only the metacosmic religiosity is taken seriously. The *Religiousness* of the Poor and the *Poverty* of the Religious masses together constitute the complex structure of Asian reality which is the matrix of an Asian theology.

The second fact is that Asia's religiousness includes also a *semitic approach* to human liberation, which is unambiguously set forth in the Bible, specially in the Old Testament and the Synoptics of the New Testament. It is this biblical soteriology that the Latin American theologians have discovered for us anew thanks to their *reditus ad fontes* and their immersion in the peoples' poverty which is the actual focus of their biblical hermeneusis. It is a source of revelation; it is God's word; it is our authoritative past as well as our norm of orthodoxy for the present. Significantly, it is also a *religious experience* of liberation expressed in a *thoroughly Asian idiom*.

Do we then have two competing models of liberation in Asia: on the one hand that of gnostic religions which seem to agree with the Roman view, and on the other, the biblical model that Latin Americans advocate? How can they both be *valid* theologies if they are contradictory? Or, are they rather, complementary? In other words, should we regard them as optional alternatives or do they both together constitute the norm of orthodoxy? On the other hand, each seems to resonate with the Asian aspiration for liberation, the one with the gnostic ideal, the other with the semitic. Hence we ask: is this conflict real or apparent; if real, is there a way out?

The present writer foresees that these questions can be wrongly formulated in the Asian Church to the detriment of her own theological creativity. The opposition between the two models of liberation, the Roman and the biblical, could be too naively equated with the age-old tension between [the Roman theological] *Tradition* and the [Revelation of the] *Scriptures* or perhaps, between the [Roman] *magisterium* and the [Latin American] *theologians*: or, more frustratingly, between a "theology of *inculturation*" in terms of Asian religiosity (which apparently agrees with the Roman perception of liberation) and "a theology of *liberation*" responding to the poverty and

oppressions of Asian masses (being a "biblical" theology articulated by the Latin Americans).

Our experience with regard to such controversies in the recent past,<sup>4</sup> teaches us that this species of reductionism should be immediately detected and quickly removed from the visual range of Asian theologians and church leaders. Hence I propose here to offer an Asian response to these two models of liberation in terms of the *non-Semitic cultures of Asia*. This response itself constitutes, hopefully, a method of discerning the locus and the method of a liberation theology in our continent.

## 2. *The Roman Christianity and the Stoic Perception of 'Liberation'*

The common meeting point between gnostic Soteriologies (or Eastern paths of Liberation) and the Roman view of Salvation, is *Stoicism*, the noblest of 'pagan' ethics and the ideological framework which Christianity absorbed in its early infancy and which bears some affinity with certain currents of spirituality in the East. The process seems to have started already in the pastoral instructions of the Apostles—though it cannot be noticed in the preaching of Jesus. As the Mediterranean church grew into the Graeco-Roman world (which thrived on a slave-economy), she entered the ethos of its Stoic spirituality which served her as an apt vehicle of inculturation. Stoicism had an enduring impact on her life and thought.

According to the Stoics' anthropology, the human person was not Aristotle's *zoon politikon*, the socio-political animal, but a *zoon koïnonikon*, a being which is in spiritual communion with the whole of humanity. Their concern was directed towards peace and harmony at all costs rather than peace and harmony through conflict. This approach was concretely manifested in the *pax romana*, the Roman Commonwealth that kept diverse nations and cultures together, minimizing confrontations. Indeed, the Roman church continues the *pax romana* tradition admirably well in what is proverbially known as Vatican Diplomacy and, in particular, in the exercise of the Petrine office, that special mission entrusted to her, of keeping the Peace of Christ (*pax Christiana*) among the diverse churches in the East and in the West.

On the other hand, the elimination of unjust socio-political strati-

4. E.g., the prolonged debate among Third World theologians on "inculturation and liberation" since 1979; see *Voices from the Third World*, June 1979.

fication of society in terms of *race*, *class*, and *sex* would have made sense to the *zoon politikon*, but not to a *zoon koinoniken* who tends to transcend such social differences spiritually. This tendency more or less continues as the theological mood in the Church of Rome even today, and seems exactly what the gnostic religions of Asia seem to encourage. We can demonstrate this by making the following three observations.

(a) First of all, the Stoic ideal of liberation was the *interior* emancipation of the human person from the *interior* bonds of spiritual slavery rather than release from external social structures of enslavement. Thus, for instance, the institution of slavery was taken for granted in the Graeco-Roman economic system in much the same way that some Asian cultures take for granted or at least tolerate such social evils as caste system, domestic servants and bonded labour.

Since the idea of a radical structural change did not seem to enter the mind of the Stoics, even the individual emancipation of slaves would appear to be a meaningless exercise because such manumitted slaves invariably ended up in the spiritually enslaving culture of the Graeco-Roman society. Hence many a Stoic (e.g., Epictetus) would prefer to see a slave become spiritually free than win legal freedom because social emancipation did not necessarily exclude internal slavery!<sup>5</sup>

Note that this Stoic view is valid only when structural change is not possible or not considered. The Roman view today is the same. The idea of 'sin' is defined primarily in terms of interior slavery.<sup>6</sup> But the Roman *Instructio* admits the reality of unjust social structures which it considers to be "consequences" of sin so that their elimination though desirable is not a substitute for the elimination of 'sin'. Sin here is primarily defined in terms of personal spiritual slavery. This is the main thrust of the Roman argument against the allegedly false brands of Liberation Theology and it is a position that would square with what Asian Religions teach and is certainly a step more Christian than the original Stoic view which did not sufficiently recognize "social sin" or structural evil as worthy of elimination.

It is true however that the social encyclicals of the recent Popes have introduced variations to the traditional theological mood of

5. See Carolyn OSIEK, R.S.C.J., "Slavery in the New Testament World", *Bible Today*, 22 (1984), 151-155.

6. *Instruction*, Introduction IV/2 and *passim*.



Rome. These encyclicals (significantly, written after Karl Marx) not only contain strong condemnations of unjust social structures but they also impose on the human/Christian conscience the *obligation* or the evangelical imperative to change inhuman social structures. Yet, Paul VI, the boldest of the Popes as far as social teachings are concerned, made it clear to the Latin American Bishops at their 15th annual general meeting of CELAM held in Rome, that "liberation" means (only) redemption from 'sin' and 'death'; and on the same day (November 3, 1974) at the noonday Angelus, he openly dissociated himself and the Church from the (presumably Marxist) use of the term "liberation" as a synonym for the process of social emancipation; instead, he is said to have selected deliberately such words as "true liberty", "authentic justice", "social involvement" etc., to describe that human activity which is directed towards a change of sinful structures of society.<sup>7</sup>

(b) This position can be traced back to the apostolic writings where another related feature which is patent in the contemporary Roman view, begins to germinate. In Gal 3:28 and parallels, Paul presents the Christian ideal, almost in the categories of the Stoic *koinonikon*, in that he advocates a kind of spiritual transcendence of what we today would recognize as RACE (Jew v. Gentile), CLASS (slave v. free) and SEX (male v. female); that is to say, a transcendence of such social divisions "in Christo (Jesu)", i.e., in terms of the new belief system of the Christian *koinonia*, or the Communion of Saints; but in actual day to day practice, the social inequalities were not structurally eliminated even among Christian converts.<sup>8</sup> For, what mattered was not institutional change with regard to these three societal categories, i.e., Race, Class and Sex (a type of social transformation which in any case was beyond the power of a minority group such as the Christians were); indeed, what really mattered was the new Christian way of living and loving within the given, structurally unchangeable divisions of society (1 Cor 7:20-24; Col. 3:11,22; 4:1; Eph. 6:5-9; 1 Tim 6:1; 1 Peter 2:18-24).

According to these apostolic exhortations, the Christian wives must obey their husbands and the Christian slaves their masters, even the cruel ones; the Christian husbands are, of course, exhorted to love

7. Ph.I. ANDRE-VINCENT, "Les 'theologies de la liberation', " *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 98 (1976), 121-122.

8. Cf. Gervase CORCORAN O.S.A., "Slavery in the New Testament". Part II, *Miltown Studies*, Dublin, No. 6, Autumn 1980, 75-77.

their wives, the Christian masters their slaves. And so on. Obviously, in course of time Christianity certainly brought within that structure a mitigation of social antagonisms.

The same observation can be made with regard to sexist discrimination illustrated in the Roman Canonists' attitude to the phenomenon of prostitution; the elimination of this inhuman institution was never their desired goal, but a "Christian" (?) understanding of it was!<sup>9</sup>

This is precisely what many of the great religions in Asia have achieved in the cultures they entered. For instance, Buddhism in Lanka absorbed a certain caste-consciousness even into one of its Monastic Orders but has brought some degree of mitigation and reduction of conflicts, though not yet its total elimination, in the Buddhist society today. It is also a fact that among the Buddhists, 'caste' is completely eliminated in worship, unlike in Hindu societies and in some Christian communities in Sri Lanka! The process of assimilating social divisions and gradually modifying them (the "assumption-elevation" techniques as you might call it) is the dialectical method of social transformation preferred in Asia. Thus de Nobili, in adopting this method in the case of castes in Madurai,<sup>10</sup> proved himself at once Roman and Asian. The discrimination against women has been softened in the course of centuries through a similar process.

The Roman experience therefore would be quite an acceptable model in our local churches for yet another reason: like the early diaspora churches, we too are *minorities* quite powerless before the unjust institutions of human society. The prophetic role of a minority Christian group in the non-Christian milieu of the Graeco-Roman culture seemed to be not that of denouncing unjust structures, much less of advocating their complete overthrow, but of witnessing to Christian love within such structures or, at least, as in the ancient church of Jerusalem, to produce an ideal community where such structures do not operate. This is not different from the Roman Church's present position and seems also to be the more acceptable "praxis of liberation" that most theologians and church-leaders of Asia would readily welcome as it also coincides with the tenets of all

9. James A BRUNDAGE, "Prostitution in the Medieval Canon Law". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1/4 (1976), 825 ff.

10. Cf. S. RAJAMANICKAM SJ, *The First Oriental Scholar*, Madras 1972, 61-63. This is the most reliable and informative work on De Nobili available today.

great non-Semitic religions.

Is this policy correct? Perhaps it is, but very inadequate as we shall see. Suffice it to say here that even if this policy is valid as a temporary, stop-gap measure in the hands of the Christian minority-churches of Asia, much more is expected of Latin America which is the world's most "Christian" continent among the three continents that mainly constitute the Third World. Hence, if there is more institutional injustice there than elsewhere, it sins against its own missionary and evangelical vocation, namely, that of becoming a sacrament of the Kingdom before the other poor Nations. A massive Christian *effort* of an organized kind meant to counteract the institutionalized order of Mammon, is, indeed, a liberational praxis which the Latin American Church cannot regard as optional. In this sense, the Nicaraguan Revolution was a great Christian event in Latin American society. The Philippines, the one and only Christian nation in Asia, has a similar obligation towards other Asian nations and towards the diaspora churches in our continent.

(c) Our third observation is that there are two models of "*Liberated Persons*" (at least one of which originated in Stoicism and) which are now part and parcel of Roman Catholicism and are not without parallels in the religious traditions of the non-Semitic East. As this third observation is the most significant for an Asian Theologian concerned with liberation, we give it a lengthier treatment.

### 3. *The Elitist Concept of the 'Liberated Person'*

We must acknowledge that Stoicism which has entered the blood stream of Roman Catholicism was not the spirituality of the slave and the poor classes, but was the high-brow philosophy of the elite. Many nobles and administrators of the Roman Empire were guided by its ethics. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius whose *Meditations* appealed to generations of Roman Christians was one of them.

Christianity appropriated the Stoic ethics in the measure that it gradually ceased to be the religion of a persecuted people and became acceptable among the aristocracy. Long before the Constantinian era, Christianity climbed the social ladder—thanks to Christian women marrying pagan nobles and thanks to the emergence of "nobility of service" (parallel to the nobility of lineage) which gave the Christians an entry into the higher administrative echelons of the Roman society. This was the process by which Christianity became

respectable in Rome.<sup>11</sup> It was also the way Christianity crystallized the Stoic approach to social problems already begun in the pastoral exhortations of Paul and his collaborators.

As an aristocratic spirituality, Stoicism also contained the belief that the wise man or the philosopher was always the real *human* person who, therefore, was called to guide the commoners—the *hoi polloi*—who were only potentially human.<sup>12</sup> Despite the Pauline doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, and the Christian Communism of the church of Jerusalem, there began to grow a two-tiered spirituality (of elite and commoners) even among the Christians. Note also that the comfortable and the elitist life of 'pagan' Rome's *Flamines* (the celibate priests) and the vestal virgins offered the Church a model of celibate, elitism that was not necessarily tied to absolute poverty or renunciation of power and prestige! There arose a class of wise and learned men and women who had no faith in the redemptive power of the poor or the spiritual capabilities of the common people.

Aristocratized in the process of being Christianized, the Church of Rome soon produced two symbols of spiritual liberation: the first took inspiration from the Roman pagan idea of *otium* or "holy leisure"; the second was also a borrowed idea: the 'eastern' model of the "desert".<sup>13</sup> And, we repeat, both these models have their parallels in Asian Religions.

The *otium* or comfortable retirement in far away estates or villas was a frequent practice of nobles and senators (both pagan and Christian) who wished to give more time to reflection over their own lives, writing memoirs or re-editing manuscripts. One historian thinks that "the first monasteries in the West were 'lay monasteries' of sensitive pagans."<sup>14</sup> Augustine too is said to have looked upon his own retirement to Cassiciacum as *Christianae vitae otium*.<sup>15</sup> The aim was to indulge in a kind of "philosophical life".

This image of the pagan/Christian philosopher reflecting and writing about the ultimate concerns of life in comfortable retirement

11. Anne YARBROUGH, "Christianization in the Fourth Century: the Example of the Roman Women", *Church History*, 45 (1976), no. 2, 149 ff.

12. Max L. STACKHOUSE, "Some Intellectual and Social Roots of Modern Human Rights Ideas", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20 (1981) 301 ff.

13. YARBROUGH, *art. cit.* (note II), p. 157.

14. P.R.L. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography*, London, 1967, 115, quoted in YARBROUGH, *art. cit.*, 157.

15. *Ibid.*

continues in the life-style of the contemporary theologian in most Asian seminaries. As a member of the 'leisure class' with plenty of time for academic speculation on religious matters, he is not the type of person radically committed to social and inter-personal justice, or inclined to identify himself with the poorer classes on whose surplus he probably lives. The feudal spirit that still permeates Asian societies and the monarchical-aristocratic structure of the presbyterial/episcopal institution of the Roman Church hardly discourage the theologian from following this social model.

This species of spiritual/intellectual elitism was not without its own counterpart in Eastern religions. For instance, the Chinese Mandarin (the cultured and wise administrator-thinker that Confucianism produced), and the Indian Brahmin (the High Caste spiritual leader who sat on the top of the social pyramid to guide the caste-ridden Hindu society) were precisely the models which, respectively, Matteo Ricci in Beijing and De Nobili in Madurai found worthy of imitation in the process of what we call "inculturation" today but was known in their times as "adaptation".

De Nobili—himself a member of the Roman Nobility—cited the early Roman praxis as a precedent to justify his method before the ecclesiastical authorities. In his famous manifesto, he modestly advertized his own aristocratic lineage presumably to gain spiritual authority and social acceptance in the Hindu hierarchy. De Nobili, it is certainly true, took the guise of a renouncer, a *Sannyasi*, with various ascetical practices proper to it, thus shunning the 'otium' model; yet, he was no ordinary Renouncer: he was, as he claimed, a "*Brahmin Sannyasi*", an ascetic of the highest social rank. If the conversion of a people and their culture to the Roman Church is a criterion of missionary success then De Nobili's method of evangelizing the Indian Brahmins was indisputably successful, the Roman *Instruction* of 1659 notwithstanding.<sup>16</sup>

But India has changed since then; so has China and most countries of Asia. Now that Marxism has become an all-pervasive ideo-

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16. This *Instruction* issued by the Propaganda Fide to the (French) Vicars Apostolic in the Far Eastern Missions in 1659, is alleged by Massimo MAROCCHI to be an historical breakthrough in that it rejects the medieval association of spiritual authority with temporal powers, and distances itself from the Jesuit method of conversion from "the top to the bottom" (*Colonialismo, cristianesimo e culture extraeuropee*, Milano, Jaca Book, 1981, 54). This is indeed a forced interpretation of the *Instruction* which nowhere advocates a bottom-to-top method of missionary involvement. Perhaps we shall have another occasion to analyse the motivation behind this document and verify its alleged 'modernity'.

logy and a quasi-religion in vast stretches of Asia—something that Latin America has not yet experienced—there seems to be an inversion of values. In the eyes of many enlightened 'proletariate', it is the elite of the leisure class including religious leaders that need to be liberated and this liberation can be achieved only in and through the *self-redemptive action of the masses*, the commoners, the *hoi-polloi*, the poor, the oppressed who are thought to be invested with a messianic mission for the total liberation of humankind.

Fortunately, 'otium' is not the only paradigm of liberation that the Roman Christianity has produced. Thanks to the winds of spiritual emancipation that blew from outside the Christian World, there came to be established an alternative image of liberation: the *desert*. In fact, it was the Desert Fathers that laid a solid foundation for the tradition of *organized monasticism* which gained recognition in the Roman Church, though it is true that the germinal idea of the desert-experience and the practice of renunciation was thoroughly biblical and Christian in content and inspiration, and was already anticipated in the circles of consecrated virgins in the apostolic and post-apostolic Church and in other fraternities on non-heremital origin in later centuries.

The 'desert' model was also anticipated in the pre-Christian era among the Hellenistic Philosophers of various schools (Stoics, Cynics, Neo-Pythagoreans, Neo-Platonists, etc.) who in their search for wisdom or philosophy, opted to be poor, i.e., freed themselves from worldly concerns and possessions. Origen and St Jerome thought of them as anticipators of Jesus' own poverty, and regarded the renunciation of possessions as a condition for acquiring "a state of spiritual perfection" (thus misinterpreting hellenistically the call narrative in Matthew 19:21).<sup>17</sup> This non-biblical concept of voluntary poverty common to the gnostic religions both of the East and of the Hellenistic West, is best exemplified in Christian Rome's 'Desert Movement' which we are concerned with here.

The 'desert' during the first centuries of the Christian era, was not only a positive symbol of an earnest *search for God* in solitude and in the company of Nature, but also a negative symbol of *social protest* against the worldly values that infected the contemporary Church and society. Both these elements together constitute the 'elan' of the desert movement.

17. J.M. LOZANO, *Discipleship. Towards an Understanding of Religious Life*, Chicago, 1980, 183-185.

Asia experienced this phenomenon at least nine centuries earlier than Rome—in the Gangetic culture of the sixth century before Christ. The corresponding symbol in India at that time (and since then) was the “forest”—the ecological haven to which the urbanized youth of the day took recourse, not only in *search* of the ultimate meaning of life but also in *protest* against a clericalized and ritualized religion and against the urbanized unfree, war-ridden society of the times. It was a spiritual search as well as a social protest. Thus arose one of the first historically documented monastic movements not only in Asia, but in the world.

The Desert Fathers of the Christian West and the Forest-hermits of the non-Christian East seem to have both formulated for all times two important dimensions of genuine asceticism: (a) *interior liberation* from the worldly possessions (actual poverty) or at least from greed for possessions (spiritual poverty); and (b) *visible rejection of a society* that is ego-centric, acquisitive, power-hungry and dehumanizing.

It is true that this noble twofold ideal (sometimes carried to Manichean extremes) succumbed later to the phenomenon of feudalization, almost degenerating into the level of ‘otium’, or ‘leisure class mentality’ prevalent even today in large-propertyed monasteries both in the Roman Church and in the Asian cultures. It could also generate an elitist form of spirituality not available or possible for the ordinary person! Yet the renewalist movements that such abuses provoked periodically within the monastic tradition itself, always rediscovered and re-affirmed the aforementioned twofold dimension which, in biblical language, can be reformulated as: (a) the *renunciation* of Mammon within one’s inner self, a renunciation coinciding with the liberating search for God, (b) the indirect and silent *denunciation* of a world-order built on Mammonic values. The Monk then is a sacrament of what is possible and, at various levels, obligatory for all rather than a symbol of an elite spirituality.

According to this model of the Liberated Person, both Roman Christianity and the non-Christian East succeeded in making the image of the Philosopher and Sage coincide with that of a poor person, a mendicant. Two principal dimensions of monastic life, namely the personal rejection of Wealth-Accumulation or Mammon as the anti-God, on the one hand, and the establishment of a socially recognizable sign of that rejection on the other, constitute the *starting-point* of a Liberation Theology in Asia. For it is based on a principle

revealed in all religions, biblical and non-biblical: namely, that God or the Liberative Agent is irreconcilably opposed to Mammon or Wealth-Accumulation which is the source of human enslavement. The 'Desert' in the Roman experience and the 'Forest' in the Indian, correspond to the biblical symbol of the wilderness, the place where God and Mammon compete for our allegiance.<sup>18</sup>

But there is another axiom revealed *only* in the Bible, specific *only* to the Christian faith and *totally absent* in all non-Semitic religions but explosively true in the context of a Marxist analysis: namely that this same God has made a defense pact—a covenant—with the Poor against the Agents of Mammon, so that the struggle of the Poor for their liberation coincides with God's own salvific action. The Stoicism of pagan Rome (ideologically operative in current Roman Theology) and the asceticism of Eastern monks (Asia's social symbol of liberation) offer no *explicit teachings* on the matter; but the theological and pastoral consequences of this biblical axiom determine in concrete the specific contribution of Christians in Asia. This, according to me, is the biblical principle that Latin Americans have discovered for us and has been misunderstood in Rome and in Asia as an ideological borrowing from Marx.

To this, then, we must turn our attention now.

#### 4. *The Biblical Perspective; The Messianic Role of the Masses*

No 'liberation theology' can claim to be rooted in the Word of God, if it does not hold together the two biblical axioms mentioned above, namely,

- (a) the irreconcilable antagonism between *God and Mammon*;
- (b) the irrevocable covenant between *God and the Poor* (i.e. a defense pact against their common enemy: Mammon).

As we have already observed, the first axiom is a universal spiritual dogma that defines the very core of practically all religions of Asia and manifests itself symbolically in the figure of the *Monk/Nun* or any of its many equivalents. This universal symbol of *opted poverty* can never be dispensed with in any liberational action or speculation in our continent because it is the symbol by which our cultures have for centuries, affirmed (a) not only that the Absolute

18. Cf. A. PIERIS, "To be Poor as Jesus was Poor?", *The Way*, 24 (1984), 186-197.



alone is the ultimate source and the intimate moment of Liberation but (b) also that the cult of Mammon or the enthronement of Capital (profit-accumulation) is not merely *not* the guarantee of human liberation but is certainly the very negation of that liberation. Thus the negation of this negation, that is to say, the open repudiation (not necessarily the overthrow) of any order of society based on a cult of Mammon, is an essential ingredient of Asian Religiosity as symbolized in the Monastic ideal of *voluntary poverty*.

In fact, Buddhism stands out in bold relief among the gnostic religions in making this important deduction from the first axiom. Concealed beneath the mythical language of the Aggañña Sutta, the Cakkavatti-Sihanāda-Suttanta and the Kūṭanāda Suttanta, taken together, is the Buddha's explosive social message: that it is *tanha* or the acquisitive tendency or the accumulative instinct in the human heart that generates all social evil; that it lays the foundation for the vicious idea of private property in place of the saner practice of common ownership; and thus it brings about class divisions and absolute poverty which leads to all types of human misery and has its repercussion on the cosmos itself, affecting the quality of life and reducing the life-span of humankind.<sup>19</sup> In the midst of such a society, the monastic community ideally composed of greed-less men and women, presents itself as an eschatological community which symbolizes and even anticipates what *could be* everybody's Future.

This explains the effectiveness of already mushrooming *basic human communities* with Christian and non-Christian membership, which give testimony to this universal dogma of spirituality: the God-Mammon antinomy. The Christian members would describe such communities as 'sacraments' of the Kingdom or social embodiments of the beatitudes. Many such Ashrams and their equivalents, by their practice of voluntary poverty (rejection of Mammon), remain the only dream of a new social order.

However, this experiment, in most instances, uses the *via negativa* proper to the oriental mentality, for it is a way of saying what human liberation *is*, by showing what it is *not*. The liberated human community is clearly shown *not* to be the present one: for it is one in which greed is *not* organized into principalities and powers. Such prophetic communities are the founders of the not-yet-discovered liberation

19. For a short excursus on this theory, see A. PIERIS, "Political Vision of the Buddhists", *Dialogue* (Colombo) XI/1-3 (Jan-Dec., 1984), 6 ff.; also "Monastic Poverty in the Asian Setting", *Ibid.*, VIII/3 (Sep-Dec., 1980), 104 ff.

theology in Asia, for they are the seeds of the not-yet-developed local churches of Asia.

But the positive action towards the reconstruction of a New Order of love (or Kingdom of God), an action whose final result only *approximates* the Ideal which everyone dreams of (the Ideal of itself, of course, is a gratuitous gift that dawns from the other side of our human horizon) has not been clearly embarked on wherever the second axiom, i.e., God's partiality to the Poor, has not been given due recognition in one's spirituality.

For instance, many gnostics of the Graeco-Roman culture practised poverty as a condition for attaining wisdom and perfection, and at times were ostentations in their renunciation; their *voluntary poverty* was not motivated by any form of solidarity with those condemned to *forced poverty*. Hence "the well-known insensitivity of impecunious philosophers to the misery of the needy"<sup>20</sup> contrasts neatly with the Christian praxis of the Roman Church which rose above the stoic's indifference to the poor. This is because the Fathers of the Church and the great founders of Monastic communities constantly kept the Church from forgetting that it is in the Poor that Christ seeks to be ministered to. Thus the Roman Church has gone a step further than the pagan ascetics whenever she was guided by the Gospel of Jesus.

However, there is still a third step we are forced to take in our understanding of the Poor when the second axiom is taken seriously. It is not enough to consider the Poor passively as the sacramental recipients of our ministry, as if their function in life is merely to help us, the Rich, to save our souls by our retaining them as perpetual objects of our compassion. That would be to take Mt 25:31 ff. out of the general context of the gospel-teaching on the role of the poor in the coming of the kingdom, a teaching that is in continuation, albeit in a more subdued tone, with the more forceful doctrine contained in Old Testament. The poor must be seen as *those through whom God shapes our salvation history*. This doctrine has been very clearly set forth, in the context of the current controversy between Rome and Latin American theologians, by the Indian Biblical Scholar George Soares-Prabhu, S.J.<sup>21</sup> After a meticulous study of the Old and New Testament *vis-à-vis* this question, he comes to these three conclusions:

20. LOZANO, *op. cit.*, 189.

21. George M. SOARES-PRABHU, S.J., "Class in the Bible: The Biblical Poor, a Social Class?", *Vidyajyoti*, 49 (1985), 320-346.

(a) "The poor in the Bible form a *sociological* group whose identity is defined not by their religious attitude but by their socio-logical situation". [In other words, we are not dealing merely with a species of 'spiritual' poverty (sort of a stoic detachment from material things or attachment to God) but of 'actual' poverty].

(b) "The Poor in the Bible are also a *dialectical* group whose situation is determined by antagonistic groups standing over and against them."

(c) "The Poor in the Bible are a *dynamic* group who are not the passive victims of history but those through whom God shapes His history!"<sup>22</sup>

If there is some similarity between these three biblical tenets and Marxist theory which sees the Poor (proletariat) as a social class at once victim and creator of human history, we can only say that the Bible could not have borrowed it from Marx! Yet Soares-Prabhu makes this pertinent observation which is worth quoting in full:

Poverty in the Bible is indeed primarily a sociological category but it is not to be defined in purely economic, much less in Marxist terms (non-ownership of the means of production). Biblical poverty has a broader sociological and even a *religious* meaning. The Poor in the Bible are an oppressed group in conflict, but it is doubtful whether their conflict can be usefully described as a class struggle. Factors other than the need to control the means of production or to secure economic betterment enter into it, and give it a different colour. The poor in the Bible aspire after a free, fraternal and non-exploitative community which does indeed call to mind the classless society of Karl Marx. But the Bible goes beyond Marx's classless society in its affirmation of a *religious basis for social justice*. The "new heavens and the new earth" will be "full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Is 11:9; 65:25); and in the New Jerusalem God Himself will dwell with human-kind and they will be His people and He will be with them . . . (Rev. 21:3-4).<sup>23</sup>

In the light of this observation, we can now review the various perceptions of liberation, namely: (1) that of pagan Rome, (2) that of Christian Rome, (3) of non-Christian Asia and (4) of Marxism, and thus discover what is specific to the biblical faith.

The Stoic perception which is the ideological substratum of Roman theology, sees liberation primarily as spiritual/personal/interior. It does, however, tolerate an individual's search for freedom from external social structures that are enslaving—as exempli-

22. *Ibid.*, 327.

23. *Ibid.*, 345-346. Emphasis added.

fied in the case of slavery. But it does not envisage any radical change of social structures.

The Roman theology which christianized Stoic ethics, goes further. It clearly mitigates, with Christian love, the social antagonisms between the various divisions of society. Moreover, it also earnestly pleads for changes of evil social structures. But it clearly upholds that such structural change is secondary to, and a consequence of, interior spiritual liberation achieved through love. In this matter, the 'Buddhism of the texts', as shown above, takes a similar stand.

The Minimal view commonly attributed to Marxists restricts liberation to a class-struggle of the Poor (= proletariat) aimed at socio-economic justice (beginning with common ownership of the means of production and ending up in a classless and stateless society).

In contrast to these three positions, Biblical Revelation seems to advocate a unitary perception of all these aspects of liberation so that it admits a mutuality in the dyads such as personal/social, spiritual/material, internal/structural, etc., whenever these are predicated of 'sin' and 'liberation from sin'.

Secondly, liberation, in the Bible, is a RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE POOR; for what liberates is the redeeming love of God, and the final fruit of liberation is the saving knowledge of God! Biblical liberation is *more* than a class struggle. It is the God-encounter of the Poor, the poor by choice and the poor by circumstances.

Thirdly, liberation that the Bible speaks of, is a *joint venture of God and the People (Poor) covenanted into one indivisible Saving Reality*. Human efforts and Divine initiatives merge into one liberating enterprise. Yet even the highest human achievement either in the personal perfection of the individual (as in traditional spiritualities) or in the collective perfection of a social group (as in a liberation spirituality) does not even approach the final glory which remains a grace, a gratuitous gift of God, immeasurable by any human criterion.

Fourthly, it is not merely individuals, but also races, cultures, peoples and nations that are called to be perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect. But the crucial fact is that Nations are *judged* by their *victims*, Christ Himself being the 'Victim-Judge' of Nations. (Mt 25:31 ff). Hence the missionary mandate to make 'disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19) is an invitation to all minority churches of

Asia to educate the nations to fear the judgements of the victims they themselves create!

Such a project is possible in Asia only if we Christians judiciously appropriate the *Religiousness of the Poor* as our spirituality, since it is the *locus* for a theology of liberation of Asia. This is the thesis which we wish to enucleate before we end this discussion.

### 5. *The Religiousness of the Poor and Asian Theology*

"The religiousness of the Poor" is an entirely new focus in the theological reflection of the Asian Church and can be traced back to the Asian Theological conference of 1979.<sup>24</sup> There, the Asian Reality was described as an interplay of (the mostly non-Christian) Asia's *religiousness* and its *Poverty*. Within five years, some Bishops of Asia had assimilated this theme into their pastoral reflection. In fact this year (1985) saw them taking part in exposure-immersion programmes that were meant to put them in touch with the religiousness of the poor so that their dream of a "Church of the Poor" (a recurrent theme in the FABC statements) could be a reality. It is on this theme again that they will meet in January next year (1986) at the seventh session of the Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA VII) which, I sincerely hope, will be the Medellin of Asia.

While admitting that religiousness and poverty constitute the Asian Reality, we should also remember that the theme "religiousness of the Poor" defines, in some way, the leitmotif of the Bible. In making this statement we are indulging in a specifically Asian reading of the Bible, which is in itself a theological exercise that reveals the dynamics of a liberation-praxis in Asia: the discovery, through participation in people's lives, of the revolutionary potential of their (Christian and non-Christian) religiosity—something that Marxists have not yet discovered.

To be more concrete, the Bible as we understand it in our Asian context is the record of a *religious experience* of a "non-people" constantly struggling to be a "people", a struggle in which God is an intimate partner. The dozen or more centuries that constitute the history of this people from the Exodus to the beginnings of Christianity were on the whole a period of humiliations for them, except for minor intervals of peace, the longest of which was about a cen-

24. Virginia FABELLA (ed.), *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity*, New York, Orbis Books, 1980.

ture (1000-900 B.C.). They were always subjugated by the Rulers of the 'developed' nations around them—the Pharaohs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Ptolemies, the Greeks and finally the Romans. What the Bible has documented for us is the religious experience (the faith-commitment, the spirituality of struggle) that characterized a colonized and exploited people: an excellent paradigm of a God-Encounter (i.e. liberation) for the Asian Poor.

Another factor about the religiousness of this poor nation of Israel was the ability to perceive the norms and principles of a *just society* as set forth in the Sinai-Convenant, though their fidelity to that ideal may not have been always exemplary! None of the colonizer-nations ever formulated such advanced canons of just government based on human dignity. How could they? It is the poor, the oppressed, the colonized, who religiously experience the justice of God and understand his just demands, since it is to them that He opens his heart. Thus in Asia, the textual religions need to be revitalized by the Peoples' religion which contain the seed of this Revelation, as exemplified by the Buddhist experiment cited below.

There is finally another lesson the Asian Poor can learn from the chosen people: there was one "glorious" era when Israel thought they could be a "People" according to the standards of the 'advanced nations'. But were they a "people" in God's eyes? The experiment itself raised this question. The period of the Kings (Saul, David and Solomon) saw the disastrous consequences of aping the Richer Nations who have not known Yahweh! Liberation does not mean copying the Rich; it means teaching the Rich Nations the justice of Yahweh.

These are the biblical data which support our insight that the religiousness of the Asian Poor (*who are largely non-Christian*) could be a new source of revelation for the Asian Church. The type of "inculturation theologies" that were busy *only* with the philosophical speculations of non-Christian Religious Texts has to be abandoned in favour of *theological communities* of Christians and non-Christians who form basic human communes with the Poor, sharing the common patrimony of a *religiosity* that their (voluntary or forced) *poverty* generates. It is they who will interpret their Sacred Texts in the light of their 'religious' aspiration for freedom.

We, on our part, have appealed to such communities to study the history of Asian religions in terms of the many liberation move-

ments which, in the past, have imparted to the sacred texts a contextual hermeneusis that explicates the implicit liberational currents that flow within such traditional religions; we have also illustrated this by educing examples from South Asian, South East Asian and Far Eastern history.<sup>25</sup>

It is heartening to note that in Sri Lanka we have even today a small nucleus of Buddhist monks with no 'power', 'property', 'prestige' to rely on, but only their poverty to boast of. They are radically committed to the life they share with the poor, thus voicing the systematically silenced protests of the voiceless. The Buddhism that appears in the columns of their explosive periodical (*Vintivida*) has made a new hermeneusis of the textual religion on the basis of the lived experience of the Poor. They call themselves the "Humanist Buddhist Monks' Association" and have successfully allowed the demands of history to uncover the hitherto unknown social dynamics of a gnostic religion.

Thus the limitations of the 'desert' model (two-tiered spirituality, exclusive concern with interior liberation, etc.) are actually eliminated by a monastic and/or ascetical life that feeds on the religious (liberative) aspirations of the Poor.

This Buddhist experiment is paralleled by many "basic human communities" of Christian and non-Christian Poor who reflect together and articulate their hope in a holier future by boldly neutralising every human obstacle that stands in their way. These symbolic beginnings are forerunners of many such 'theological communities' where the seed of liberation-theologies, already sown, will grow to maturity. The written records of the Christian Workers' Fellowship in Sri Lanka are a testimony to these seminal liberation theologies. The Bishops who were exposed to these groups recently (August 1985) were visibly moved and pleasantly surprised by the evangelical boldness of their experiment, the theological depth of their reflections, and the non-Christian contribution to their Christian theology.

We pray that here in Asia this new method of theology will be respected or at least tolerated by those who have the power to frustrate it. The first step in this method is the building up of 'Kingdom communities' or 'basic human communities' wherein Christian and non-Christian members strive together for the dawn of *Full Humanity*.

25. Aloysius PIERIS, SJ, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of a Third World Theology", *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 19/2 (1982), 17-18, 21-25; *Vidyajyoti* 46 (1982), 229-232, 234-240.

"Full Humanity" is not only the common ideal of their strivings, but also the Christological title by which the Christian members of such communities recognize and confess the One whose disciples they boldly claim to be.

Moreover, the non-Christian context (i.e., the religiousness of the Asian Poor) imparts an indelible cultural stamp on such communities so as to challenge the Christian members to articulate their new (i.e. Asian) religious identity. This new Christian identity can be easily detected in the theological language employed in many liturgies celebrated in these "theological communities of the Poor"

Regrettably, some of us are misnamed "Asian Theologians" when, in reality, all we do is to explicitate this implicit theology and educe the ecclesiological implications of the newly found Asian Christian identity. In doing so, however, we do articulate a theology of liberation for our continent and simultaneously announce the birth of the genuine local churches of Asia.



# Asia and Justice

Samuel RAYAN, S.J.

**A**SIA'S quest for justice is only one aspect of comprehensive quest for full humanity. The search for full and authentic humanity has surely to do with justice in the economic order and in social relationships. But it has also to do with problems of culture and with *asianness*; with questions of freedom and creative imagination; with the shape and the depth and silence of things, and the experience of the Divine. Asia's is a quest for wholeness. Asia seeks to recover from the violent breakdown, which it suffered in the colonial era, of its spirit, its creative elan and its confidence. But it also wants to make positive use of its tragic experiences, and to forge ahead, build afresh, and make its own human, cultural, material and spiritual contribution to the shaping of the future of our world.

This quest presents the churches of Asia, small and limited as they are, with challenges and tasks which are immense and complex, and often enough, baffling and painful. We tend, therefore, to be cautious and reserved in meditations on the response of the church. Rightly so, perhaps. Nevertheless we meet the challenges and take up the tasks, even as we agonize over the situation of massive poverty and misery in a world in which nobody indeed need suffer hunger or want. The situation is not something outside us. With its tears and laughter, its struggles and hopes, it is part of ourselves and our history, part of the life of our earth and of humankind. We are beginning to sense the power of a deep-going spiritual-social-historical solidarity which binds the earth together. We know that God holds this tangled mess, instinct with life, close to God's own heart. We know God is always loving it into clarity and freedom and enabling it to walk its own path and carve out its own destiny in partnership with God. God is here, deeply involved in the history we are making, profoundly interested in it, profoundly affected by it. God is here, urging and challenging us to transform our earth into something of God's Kingdom where divine dreams are realized and the divine name is experienced as meaningful.

May I then start by sharing with you a letter circulated among friends by three young people who have chosen to live and work

with the poor in a rural area in North India. There is nothing unusual about this letter. It carries a simple Christmas greeting from three friends who are working with a larger movement which is secular in character and is committed to social change in the direction of a fraternal, egalitarian community of women and men. I thought of sharing most of this letter with you because in its simplicity and ordinariness it reflects some of the main concerns that are our constant preoccupation.

### *A Letter*

During this season, as we all celebrate the birth of Jesus, naturally we think of you, who, like us, want to struggle for the realization of vision. We wish you all success in your faith-involvement. We pray specially that the faith involvement of yours and ours for the coming New Year bears fruit.

Let our involvement and mission also meet the genuine and legitimate aspirations of the vast majority of our poor and exploited people, no matter what religion, caste, sex and class they belong to.

As you know, since one year we have been living out a new venture here in the diocese. We strive for a greater identification of ourselves with the poor and the outcasts through a non-conventional religious praxis and involvement with people's movements.

At the grass-root level we have been able to contact about 30 villages in our block. We are trying to give the poor a sense of solidarity and dignity by being with them in their struggle for justice. Frequent meetings are held in their villages.

During this last year we also went through experiences of tension, challenges and risks which threatened our very existence here, as a result of our option for the poor. But our faith that the Lord is with us gives us extra strength.

At the macro-level we want to reach the root-cause of people's problems in order to build God's Kingdom where His people can enjoy His peace through an experience of equality, justice and fellowship among themselves. This is possible only through the mutual support and concerted action of all in the struggle for His Kingdom. We shall draw strength from Jesus of Nazareth who inaugurated for us a way to reach the goal. . . ."

There are numerous groups of this kind all over India. Each has its own face and voice, its own dynamics, way of life, programmes of action and methods of approach. Some operate in large cities like Bombay, others work in villages and rural areas, among the Untouchables (the Harijans or God's people, as they are called, the Dalits—the oppressed—as they call themselves), for the Tribals, or landless agricultural laborers, or poor fisherfolk. Groups are made up of

sisters, lay people, priests in varying combinations: and their number is on the increase. Their emergence is part of a larger awakening widespread stirrings and movements that mark the masses of the Indian people at the hour of history so ambiguous, so unsure, so full of threat and of promise.

The letter represents one type of church response. But it is not the only kind of response in existence in the churches of India. I speak from within the experience of the Indian churches. Some of the things I say may, with proper adjustments, apply to or illustrate realities in other situations on the Asian continent.

### Five Responses

It seems to me that, roughly speaking, five different kinds of responses have been forthcoming from the church. Some of them may sound dated, but I decided to count and list all of them, for it is not rare that what appears to be dated and is rejected at the conscious level remains alive and operative at the level of the sub-conscious, especially if it has had a fairly long conscious history in the life of the church.

#### *The Spiritual Alone*

In the first of the five responses we read that the church's concern is spiritual and religious; questions of social justice and social power lie outside the scope and competence of the church; these are the business of the state and of secular society. Economic and political questions will, therefore be addressed by the church only when and in the measure in which they touch the individual Christian's interior life and spiritual well-being; or when they affect the rights of the church as an institution.

Behind this response or non-response lies a faith/society dualism which is wholly alien to a faith committed to Creation, Incarnation, Resurrection and the Sacramental practice. It is alien to the historical life and ministry of Jesus in which the faith finds its root and sustenance. It is also a stranger to the ethos of Asia, whether this is represented by Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism or Shintoism. Yet this dualistic attitude, which in fact is a refusal to respond to historical reality, has had wide currency and profound influence in the religious milieu, including the Christian milieu, for several centuries. It held sway for a long time in the Asian churches of colonial origin and in

colonial theologies and spiritualities. The dichotomy and religious other-worldliness were convenient for feudal and colonial exploitation and oppression. Few today would defend or profess such dualism. And yet we must ask whether it is not there beneath the surface subtly influencing decisions.

Its remnants perhaps survive in sharp distinctions made between the roles to be played by clergy, religious and laity. True, the call and mission of the church is not in the realm of technicalities of social ordering. The church's task is to witness to the Kingdom of God by life and word, to be in each place a manifest and recognizable realization and embodiments of the Kingdom; to be a clear mediation of the mystery of god as Freedom and Love. But this cannot be done except in and through the concrete realities of historical existence; in and through the experience of food, health, freedom, friendship, social acceptance and equality; in and through work, organization and struggle to secure these for all God's children. To say the same thing differently: the mission of the church has to do with the Godwardness of life; with life's God-dimension and God relatedness; with the sacramentality of human existence and creativity; with the deeper, humanising, holistic meaning of creation and history. This covers all human aspirations and activities and includes economic and political realities and cultural-social processes. This responsibility rests with all believers, and with the entire ecclesial community. In the church all of us, endowed with mutually accountable charisms, leaderships and functions, have to walk together, and work as one church and stand in the front line even as we celebrate our struggles and hopes together in the sacraments.

### *God's Will*

A second response is to see social realities and situations of poverty, deprivation, oppression and suffering as the result of divine disposition, as occasions of meritorious endurance for some and virtuous generosity for others. It often amounts to pious fatalism and resignation to a providence which pre-determines history. This tendency to see the will of God in every situation and event is the product of a defective understanding of God's creative action and the relationship in which God and creation exist. It is as if God did not share with created realities His own freedom, autonomy and inventiveness as much as these could be bestowed and received. It is as if God were the sole agent, a presupposition which would void creation of all

sense and purpose. The truth is that our faith reveals God as great precisely in that God shares, and initiates processes and trusts them to evolve on their own and carve out their own path and walk it in freedom and fantasy towards their own completion while God accompanies them all the way.

At the human level this means reflective consciousness, freedom and responsibility for our own history and the future of our earth. No particular social setup or concrete historical reality is the result of divine determination. It is in every case the product of human decisions and interactions, the result of a history of sin and grace, of inertia and freedom, of selfishness and love. It is God's expectation that we take our history into our own hands (upheld always by God's own) and mould it and remould it, even as Jesus did in his ministry, and as God did in raising Jesus from the dead and continues to do in dethroning the powerful and giving the Kingdom to the lowly and the poor.

### *Belief and Welfare*

A third response chooses directly to address poverty, misery and suffering by providing relief and undertaking emergency measures. This is the traditional way in which the love which has always glowed in the heart of the church and its pre-scientific sense of social responsibility have expressed themselves. Institutions for the care of the sick, the orphan, the leper, the aged, the destitute and the wayfarer have been the creations of this concern. Its most renowned representative today is Mother Teresa who is accepted by all, whose love, poverty and spirituality are understood and appreciated, and whose work is supported generously by governments as well as the wealthy the world over.

This response, no doubt, is essential as long as human existence remains frail and vulnerable and subject to the vicissitudes of time, the caprice of nature and the failure of our hearts to be just and gentle. But should not relief remain strictly an emergency measure which may not be institutionalized and perpetuated? Is it right to give the impression that the task of the church is to pick up year after year those whom the system breaks and throws out and to enable them to die loved for an hour or two, but never to call a halt to the process of destroying women and men by the millions? Is it all right for the church to undertake the cleaning up of the human

debris while paying never enough attention to the nature of the system and the cause of measureless wretchedness in a world of untold resources? Can the church be true to itself and to the Reign of God in undertaking relief and emergency work without adverting to the question of justice and the rights of the people, and without consciously and expressly giving to relief services the biblical dimension of prophetic criticism and prophetic protest?

### *Technology*

A fourth response consists in projects for modernisation. Its endeavor is to introduce new technology into industry, agriculture, and communication in an effort to achieve a maximum of efficiency and to overcome what it calls "backwardness" which is identified as the root cause of poverty, misery and suffering. Modernising action constitutes, I guess, the newest and most powerful response the churches are trying to give to the challenge of Asia. It is encouraged, supported, guided, even controlled, from the centres of advanced industrialism. And behind it lies the ideology of development.

But the presuppositions of this response are not in all respects sound. It forgets that Asia's history has been violently distorted and Asian lands have been systematically underdeveloped by Western imperialism. It overlooks the ability and resource of non-modern peoples who have laid the foundations of world culture and created the world's languages. Besides, numerous studies have shown that while improvements made through modernisation in the economic sphere are real and production has grown, the total human situation has worsened, the number of the landless and the unemployed has increased, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Studies in the processes and effects of the Green Revolution and of development through foreign aid may be cited as proof. The power differential both within India and between countries, within global capitalism, has grown to the detriment of dependent groups in India and of the dependent Indian economy. It must be clear that the argument here is not against adoption of technology or the need of modernization. The argument rather is against the naive idea that technological modernisation is sufficient to meet the human problem, even the economic problem, on the Asian scene. Technology can be of service to the needy masses and make a contribution to the cause of justice and human dignity only when it functions within a different, humane, conception of economics and of production relationships.

*Structural Change*

That brings us to the last response which the church is beginning to give through individual christians and especially through small groups of its members who are moving out of elite institutions and non-protesting relief operations and well-provided city life into the slums, the villages, the far-flung rural districts, the forests where Tribals live, and coastal areas where poor fisherfolk toil to support a traditional church and eke out a living in deep attachment to the christian faith mingled with ignorance and many a questionable belief and practice. The Christmas message I quoted at the beginning comes from one such group. The perception of these groups is that beyond individual sins and virtues there stand structural realities which are in themselves unbalanced, distorted, unjust and subhuman; these are responsible in the main for the massive poverty and suffering of hundred of millions of simple and hard-working people, and for their centennial marginalisation and humiliation. They point to a socio-economic system which can survive only by underdeveloping and dominating more and more people ever more deeply and which therefore necessitates the arms race, the armament trade, the development of armies across the globe, the contriving of conflicts, the setting up of military regimes, support for dictatorships, and development of scientifically refined methods of torture, assassination and destabilisation.

It is the conviction of these groups of christians that this system with its economic, political and cultural structures must be removed and replaced by one that will be less and less or not at all oppressive and exploitative; which will grow ever more human, egalitarian and fraternal; and will form the basis of a just and loving society. Governments also speak, not rarely, of radical transformations and a new society, but their rhetoric hides the plans of those who profit by present arrangements to keep the masses hoping and guessing, and grasping at reforms which prove in the end to be merely cosmetic. Hence this last type of response puts its trust in the popular masses, their sanity and sense of values, their solidarity and mutual support, their rich humanity and sense of community as yet only slightly eroded by competitive drive for profit and by consumerist craving. The attempt is to make emerge a socially acquired and shared critical awareness of the reality of the situation, of the forces at work in it and their social meaning, of the root causes of deprivation and marginality, and the nature of the system itself, as well as an under-

standing of the values, actions and processes by which structural changes can be brought about as swiftly as possible in the direction of greater humanity, equality, freedom and justice.

Such are the five types of responses I have been able to discern. Some of them, even all of them, may be found to co-exist in the same local church, giving rise to tensions and conflicts. For not all of us, nor all the churches in any region, are at the same level of critical awareness or analytical understanding of social realities, and of the earthly implications of Revelation and Faith. Different kinds of self-education and action will, therefore, have to develop within the churches. And it seems to me that the church will always have to respond to human suffering at the personal level and continue to provide all the relief it possibly can in a broken world. But it must more and more fully and profoundly make its own the transformative response mentioned above. It has to commit itself clearly and openly to work for structural change less relief becomes some sort of collaboration with and lubricant for the dominant system of injustice and oppression. And since a just social order is constitutive of its faith-goal, the church will be wary of undertaking developmental work unless it actually contributes to social change marked by the values and orientations acceptable to the Faith, and by the human ideals of fairness, equality and freedom.

### Justice

At this point I would like to say a word about justice, which is the perspective from which the responses of the church are being considered. Justice and Faith are mutually constitutive. We cannot have the one without the other. Biblical revelation (to which Faith is the response) in its foundational event discloses God as Justice intervening in history to end slavery, abolish domination and set the oppressed free. God's justice is not forensic. Rather, it is God's fidelity to every creature God has loved into existence: a fidelity which provides all that is required, and more than is required for each creature to become fully itself along with the rest of creation. God clothes the flowers and feeds the birds, and makes the sun shine and the rain fall on all people, irrespective of their demerits and merits. This fidelity of God is the justice of the Kingdom for which we are to strive and hunger and thirst. Human beings need food, clothing and shelter; they need health, rest and community, love and friendship; they need to be named, spoken to and honoured, and they



need freedom and creative imagination and the material on which these can be exercised; and human beings need forgiveness and assurance. God is faithful, and provides these in abundance in the gift of earth, in the gift of the human community, in human inventiveness and in the yearnings and interlockings of our hearts and the dreams of our spirit.

To believe is to collaborate with God so that all women and men everywhere may have these blessings in abundance; and may, through them, have deep personal and social experience of God's love-fidelity which they can then share and thus be faithful—just to one another. In the practice of justice, then, the experience of God would abound. Injustice on the other hand and unjust structures obscure and hamper the historical realization of God's fidelity-justice and blackout the divine face. They distort God's image, and end up projecting unbelief and/or idolatry. The challenge of Jesus is as pressing today as ever; and clearer than ever. God or Mammon. We cannot serve both nor pretend to be neutral. That is why according to Jeremiah to know God, to have faith-experience of God, is to do justice. The passionate pleading of prophets is not for ritual, asceticism or sacrifice but for the flow of justice like a river in spate. For what is it that God really requires? Not that holocausts be offered but that we act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God. And the summons Jesus issues is that primacy be given to the quest for the justice of God's Kingdom against the injustice, inequality, oppression and misery of the rule of Ceasars and Herods and all other powers which prove themselves satanic by the deprivation, domination and wretchedness they administer. Love one another is Jesus' final invitation; as he has loved. And he loved by providing the health, the bread, the rice, the liberty, the honour and the acceptance the neglected masses of the people needed to become fully themselves and know themselves and one another as God's children. Justice is the basic form of love. Where justice is absent love cannot grow; there love lacks earth and roots.

God's justice is concrete and contextual. In Egypt it meant liberation for slaves, in the desert it meant bread for the hungry. In Galilee the justice of God's Kingdom meant freedom and fellowship for outcasts and sinners. Before accumulated wealth God's justice is the summons to opt out of greed and join the brotherhood of the non-acquisitive. And before oppressive religion it takes the form of a startling affirmation of the primacy and centrality of human beings. The Sabbath is for people, not the other way round. The shape

of justice and its demands have to be discerned and defined in each concrete historical situation. Centrally produced social doctrines can only give certain general orientations which have to be put in dialectical interaction with concrete contexts before they can be of meaningful service. It is important to remember too that no teaching is free of historical and cultural conditioning, and consequent limitations and blind spots. General and universal doctrines can fail to speak to crying needs and pressing problems. The commitment to justice of the local church in given contexts is crucial here. In each place the community with its leadership has to discern and determine the meaning of justice and the appropriate action to be taken. This of course cannot be done once for all; it will be an ongoing process in the wake of the truth that keeps emerging. The truth of the people and of society, the truth of history and of justice itself emerges in and through the praxis of justice. Through sustained praxis, always to be critically evaluated, the church too realizes itself progressively.

### Praxis

What the churches in Asia can do for the social transformation of the continent is obviously little. What it can do will remain symbolic. But its tiny gestures can have a prophetic quality. The small steps it takes, if these represent hearty strivings and the utmost it can do, will carry a spiritual force which could be of great significance. For Jesus is loved and respected all over Asia; he shines over Asia's horizon as a sign of hope, the Bright Morning Star. Encouraged by this hope, may I make a few concrete suggestions which I consider practical.

(i) We need social analysis. Lack of a scientific critical-analytical understanding of society at all levels, local, Asian and global, is one of the major weaknesses of the church. It dulls the spirit and hampers actions. In the absence of a clear and critical grasp of social reality, our good will can develop services which may betray the cause of justice, hurt people, forge new chains of enslavement and lead the church to take the wrong side. It is when the analytically understood social reality is brought into dialectical relationship with the faith as grasped here and now that clear visions of justice and concrete action programs can come to birth. To secure for the church at all levels a formation in historical, structural, action-oriented analysis of society would constitute a trust of the church's commitment to justice and a first step in its praxis.

(ii) A second step would be a two-year (or five-year?) plan of instruction, catechesis, preaching and formation which will put justice once more at the centre of the christian message. For too long has the message seemed to be unconcerned with justice or even to be supportive of conquest, enslavement and plunder. Could a whole new presentation of the faith be designed in which faith's justice dimension will stand out clearly? Contextual accenting and underscoring of aspects of the Kerygma in order to respond to situation is a necessity. It tallies with biblical practice in Old Testament as well as New Testament times. For the Kerygma is not a balanced theory for contemplation but a programme of life and summons to commitment to the Kingdom of God pressing upon our heart and history now.

(iii) The liturgy, and the Eucharistic celebration in particular, have to be rethought and restructured in relation to justice questions and human rights struggles. Is it consonant with the mind of Jesus and the thrust of his Gospel to hold up any rite as the centre and summit of Christian life and discipleship? Liturgy is derivative. It receives content and meaning from the worship of life, from the following of Jesus, from the drinking of his cup and immersion in his baptism. A statement of the Indian Theological Association (October 1983) has the following:

Participation in people's action for their liberation, with firm belief in God's presence in their midst and trust in his assistance, is also an integral dimension of the liturgy. Worship is therefore celebrated not only in rituals and sacraments, but also in the day-to-day work and struggles to attain fulness and to transform the human community into the household of God. In this perspective baptism becomes the commitment to a God who commits himself to his people and their struggle, and Eucharist becomes a celebration of this struggle and their victory.

Liturgy cannot be taken, ready-made and frozen, from the pages of books. It must come warm and fresh from life, which it will sum up, re-express and celebrate. It will have the throb and smell of the people and their earth. And it will, it must, equip them for further commitment, action and courageous endurance. The celebration must reflect the values of the Kingdom which is the heritage of the poor, and not the patterns and upper manner of feudal time. It must manifest the equality, freedom and joy of the eschatological feast of the Kingdom, and not follow the class structure and discriminatory ranking of feudal and capitalist societies. The Eucharist must become an education in celebration of the new egalitarian social order, the world of justice, love and of the primacy and centrality of human beings.

(iv) In nearly all the Asian lands women are victims of multiple oppression and injustice. It is important in this context that the Church eliminate from its midst every semblance of discrimination based on sex difference. All Asians must be able to see that in the christian churches there is real equality and justice; that in them the future (the eschatological) world is already being realized. Admission of women to all positions of leadership and decision-making on a par with men will not only enrich the faith life of the community but shine out as a hope-giving and compelling sign before the peoples of this continent. It will challenge some of our entrenched social attitudes which are little consonant with the spirit of the gospel.

(v) We are not satisfied with the production of symbolic actions. We want to see social transformation happening, and want to play a part in bringing it about. It is imperative therefore for us to line up with people of other faiths and ideologies who are committed to the same goal of justice and equality and a free, fraternal, non-exploitative society. It will be a privilege for us to explore with others the liberational potential of all the religions and their resources to challenge injustice and trigger action for change. Critical collaboration with (non-dogmatic) Marxists may be of particular interest and importance. We cannot forget that we owe our present awakening to questions of justice and injustice and the necessity and possibility of social transformation to Karl Marx, his writings and the movement he initiated. True, his vision has been distorted in many places. It may be our task to redeem it in the grace of our faith and make it a reality of history in the measure it responds to the gospel dream enshrined in the Lord's Prayer, in the celebration of the Eucharist and in the Symbol of the Trinity.

(vi) We shall not be naive, and shall not forget that social justice and newness have to be bought with a price. In action for justice there is danger and risk. We remember Archbishop Romero and the thousands of women and men killed in Central America and South Africa for taking a stand for justice and the dignity of people. We remember the martyrs of Asia who have borne witness to the truth of human beings before Asia's dictators, generals and exceptional regimes. We remember Jesus, the martyr of freedom and justice. And we recall his poetic parable of the grain of wheat which must fall to the ground and die if it would rise to new life and burst into a harvest. We pray that we may not refuse to die. We pray that we may stand together and support one another. Does that parable apply only

to individual christians or also to the church, in each place and each epoch? Instinctively the church seeks to survive. Survive for what, if not to bear witness to God's justice and love? But to do so is to come to the cross. The church too must be ready to die in order to rise again: rise not necessarily as Church, but as something greater, something transformed as the Kingdom of God in the wider human history.

**Blessed Simplicity.** The Monk as Universal Archetype. By Raimundo PANIKKAR. *New York, The Seabury Press, 1982.* Pp. xii-202. \$ 17.95.

This book is based on a symposium entitled "The Monk as Universal Archetype" held in November 1980 at Holyoke, Massachusetts. It consists of the lectures given on that topic by Raimundo Panikkar and the interactions and responses of the others with the ideas of the author. The book is more than a treatise on the monastic life. Panikkar confesses that since his early youth he has seen himself as a monk—"but one without a monastery, or at least without walls other than those of the entire planet. And even these, it seemed to me, had to be transcended—probably by immanence—; without a habit, or at least without vestments other than those worn by the human family. Yet even these had to be discarded, because all cultural clothes are only partial revelation of what they conceal: the pure nakedness of total transparency only visible to the simple eye of the pure of heart." We can see already the vision and the trend that his development will take in this statement.

Panikkar prefers to speak of "monkhood" rather than monasticism, because he believes that there is a monk in every human heart. So he speaks of monkhood as an *Archetype*, meaning something that is constitutive of human living, "that we too may be called upon to realize, but in a different manner [from traditional monks] which expresses the growth and newness of the *humanum*." He begins with an exposition of the method he will follow in the chapter on "The Monastic Vocation." He then goes on to develop "The Archetype of the Monk" and spells out its consequences in a long section entitled "The Canon of the Disciple." He breaks this down into nine *sūtras* and gives a gloss and a commentary on each: The Breakthrough of the Primordial Aspiration; The Primacy of Being over Doing and Having, Silence over Word; Mother Earth Prior to the Fellowship of

Men; Overcoming Spatio-Temporal Parameters; Transhistorical Consciousness above Historical Concern; The Fullness of the Person over the Individual; The Primacy of the Holy; The Memory of the Ultimate and the Presence of its Gate. The whole of this long section is in dialogue between his deep grasp of the traditional elements of the monastic life and what these elements can mean in an encounter with "modernity". He seeks to "formulate the aspiration of contemporary Man in search of unification as he is confronted by the manifold character of his being and the surrounding reality." In the final part of his presentation he ties all the various elements into a "Synthesis" (which is not a summary!).

The book ends with two appendices: "A Liturgy of the Earth" and "Liturgy of the Sacred Word." They are beautiful and deep and fittingly close a study of monkhood that opens into life.

If you are a person who feels that religion and religious life sometimes—perhaps often—seems a dead burden, this book may lighten your mind and heart and bring you refreshment and encouragement. "The new monk has not yet acquired self-consciousness, and the Disciple is not always aware that he or she is following the Master. You will find this new monasticism in the slums, in the marketplaces, in the streets, but also in the mountains and valleys, and even in the corridors, class-rooms, and lobbies of modern society. Similarly, you will often find the new monk living in the old monasteries. His name is legion and his surname is dissatisfaction with the status quo; but his pedigree is as mysterious as the sources of the waters: they emerge from every slope—because it has rained, and rained heavily over all the Earth, and the clouds are still hovering overhead. . ."

This book can be a refreshing walk in the rain . . . of the Spirit. One condition: don't take along an umbrella!

Roman Lawicki, S.J.

# Wanted: A Liberation Theology for Hinduism

Nayantara SARGAL\*

**H**AVE you ever met a simple human being a person who is all of a piece, whose every action you can predict? You haven't because there is no such person. Nor is there any such society, since societies consist of individuals. We are always in for surprises, and some surprises rescue individuals and establishments—whether they are political, religious or artistic—from sinking into paralysis. Examining issues afresh from time to time, and coming to different conclusions about them, keep people and cultures from decaying. And since surprises are such a regular part of life and human nature, they should not surprise us.

It should not surprise us, for example, that the Catholic church has just given a policy lead in a new direction, with the recent Vatican announcement that Christians may use violence, if it is needed, to fight against intolerable oppression. The church's view of "liberation theology" has thus taken a dramatic step forward from its previous stand that the clergy should confine itself to spiritual salvation and remain neutral on social, political and economic issues. In Latin America, individual activist members of the clergy have supported struggles against dictatorship when their consciences did not allow them to stay passive, but they had no official sanction to do so. In the Philippines, the church refused to stay neutral when it threw its prestige and backing into the campaign against Marcos. In India, several bishops have taken the view that the clergy should take part in mass movements. In seeing the signs of the times, the Vatican has shown that the church is a thinking organism, alive and sensitive to suffering, and that it has a direct role to play in its alleviation. It has also given itself an injection of vitality that should strengthen it for the new tasks it will face in the coming century.

Christianity, including the Catholic church, has never ruled out violence as such. The Crusades and other wars, the tortures of the

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Inquisition, all bear witness to sanctioned violence. Yet the new policy statement touches on some fundamental questions. When is violence necessary? When is oppression intolerable? What constitutes oppression? These questions could be debated for years. But what has been accomplished at one stroke is the church's active involvement with the whole human being, not his soul alone, and thus with problems of poverty, land reform, and with protest against all forms of exploitation.

Can the modern interpreters of Hinduism match this clarity and straightforwardness? What, for instance, is our stand on violence? The ancient Hindus solved this problem by creating a caste system in which it was the duty of the warrior caste to wage war for gain, glory or necessity. The rest of society looked after other matters and non-violence remained the hallowed ideal. It is not so simple today with a national army drawn from all castes, and private mafias killing rural workers and guarding land estates and the status quo with guns.

The Hindu accommodation of all the urges in human nature—from the basest to the best—within a flexible working morality has served it well in the past and given Hinduism its tremendous survival value. But what was good enough for a pastoral or early urban society with a rigid caste structure, is not good enough for today. The same questions asked today give us confusing answers. Does the Hindu believe in violence? Yes and no. Does he believe in renunciation? Yes and no. Money? Fun and games in sex? Ambition? Power? Yes and no to all these. In older, simpler times the answer depended on one's age and stage in life. With that guideline dissolved, middle class Hindu life is as much a free-for-all as capitalism was for the robber barons of the 19th century. That anything goes is obviously not a very good religious motto is clear from the corrupt and rapacious society we have become. Om Shanti rolls off the tongue of every rogue and rascal. Every tax dodger, racketeer, sex maniac and power-drunk little Caesar calls himself a good Hindu, and is accepted as such. This is carrying our famous tolerance too far. Mankind's most staggering metaphysical heritage deserves better heirs.

Since it is not likely that a black marketeer or a rapist is going to do much soul-searching, it has to be done for him, and this is the work that those who know and cherish the great heritage we call Hinduism must begin to do. We, too, are faced with the need for re-examination in modern times, with clear injunctions for the age we

live in. No Hindu authority has yet come forward with a clear injunction about caste and untouchability, to consign them to yesterday's rubbish heap. If they are withering, it is due to social and economic changes, and not to reassessment on the part of the Hindu establishment.

The urge to relate our scripture to life, to create a kind of liberation theology for Hinduism, seems to have lapsed after the Hindu reformation. Mahatma Gandhi did perform this task during the struggle for freedom, but singly, and not as a part of a movement, as the Hindu reformation became, and his passion and compassion died with him. The last reform-minded leader, Dr Ambedkar, simply turned his back on what he must have considered an irredeemable mess, by becoming a Buddhist. We have dedicated individuals today who, rather than preach, are committing their entire lives to community service of different kinds, and each such heroic lifetime speaks volumes for the Hindu ideal of service. Yet it is the Hindu "church" that must speak if policy is to be spelled out and all Hindus included in it. Only an authoritative body, recognised as such, can give a new interpretation to old scriptures when it concerns so many millions of people. And so far no such light has come from institutional sources, nor even from the various *maths* and *parishads* that claim to speak for Hindus.

What we need is a Hindu establishment that loves Hinduism enough to employ it as the great instrument for society's progress that it was meant to be. Nothing that is really valuable in our tradition need be overturned in this process. The Catholic church's new message has been delivered under the leadership of a pope who though widely travelled and well acquainted with the world, has a staunchly traditional image, which includes the church's traditional stand on birth control. Good Catholics, especially if they are Kennedys, can still have 19 children without a qualm, instead of bearing their fair share of responsibility for an overcrowded planet.

Since the Catholic church has shown it is a living institution and not a static monument, it is possible that this opposition to birth control will change, and that the church will before long choose to reckon with the dangers of overpopulation, and the sufferings that repeated child-birth inflict on the poor. And when the change comes, it will be beneficial not only to Catholics and the world, but to the Catholic creed and the church itself. Cutting off the deadwood can only strengthen the best in a tradition.



# Document

## Freedom and Liberation

### *Reflection on a New Document from Rome*

Kurien KUNNUPURAM, S.J.

ON the 22nd of March, 1986, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith issued an "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation."<sup>1</sup> This is a sequel to an earlier "Instruction on Certain Aspects of 'the Theology of Liberation'", which the same Congregation had published on the 6th of August, 1984. The Congregation has clearly stated that "between the two documents there exists an organic relationship. They are to be read in the light of each other."<sup>2</sup>

The new Instruction is seen as a vindication of liberation theology,<sup>3</sup> a "re-launching of the movement."<sup>4</sup> It is supposed to "send out a clarion call to Catholics all over the world to work for the liberation of millions who are subjected to economic, social and political oppression."<sup>5</sup> The new document is thus "a sign of the Vatican applying *Realpolitik*."<sup>6</sup> Are these perceptions true? What does the Instruction really teach? To answer these questions a serious study of the document is necessary.

This paper begins by an exploration of the Instruction's understanding of freedom and liberation. It goes on to examine the view of man and society that underlies this understanding. Then it investigates the role of the Church in the liberation of humankind. Finally, it makes a critical evaluation of the Instruction.

## I. Freedom and Liberation

1. The Instruction begins with an examination of the modern quest for freedom and aspiration to liberation.<sup>7</sup> At the Renaissance, which marks the dawn of modern times in the West, people sought to gain freedom of thought and action by a return to antiquity in philosophy and by scientific knowledge and control of the laws of nature. Basing

1. Though the document is dated 22 March, apparently it was released only on April 5, 1986. Hereafter it is referred to as CFL.

2. CFL 2.

3. See *Newsweek* (April 14, 1986) p. 44.

4. Words of G. Gutierrez, as quoted in *Time* (April 14, 1986) p. 45.

5. *Examiner* 137 (April 19, 1986) 10, p. 365.

6. The comment of an unnamed churchman, as quoted in *Newsweek* (April 14, 1986) p. 45.

7. CFL 5.

himself on his understanding of St Paul, Luther furthered the "struggle for freedom from the yoke of Law which he saw as represented by the Church of his time."<sup>8</sup> But it was in the Age of Enlightenment and at the time of French Revolution that "the call to freedom rang out with full force,"<sup>9</sup> so that future history is seen "as an irresistible process of liberation inevitably leading to an age in which man totally free at last, will enjoy happiness on this earth."<sup>10</sup>

2. One of the aspects of modern quest for freedom is the endeavour to master nature through the development of science and technology. By wresting from nature its secrets, it was hoped, man will overcome his powerlessness before the hidden forces of nature. These efforts had a large measure of success. As the Instruction points out:

While man is not immune from natural disasters, many natural dangers have been removed. A growing number of individuals is ensured adequate nourishment. New means of transport and trade facilitate the exchange of food resources, raw materials, labour and technical skills, so that a life of dignity with freedom from poverty can be reasonably envisaged for mankind.<sup>11</sup>

But progress has not been an unmixed blessing. It seems to have led to an ecological crisis that threatens to destroy the very foundations of the future. Besides, technological power has given rise to new forms of inequality between those who possess knowledge and those who are simple users of technology. The rapid development of technology has paved the way to concentration of economic power in the hands of a few, with the result that relationships of dependence have grown within nations and between nations.

3. Another aspect of the modern liberation movement has been the quest for freedom in the social, economic and political areas of human existence.<sup>12</sup> This effort to put an end to the domination of man by man and to usher in a new social order in which the equality and brotherhood of all are respected has to some extent borne fruits.

Legal slavery and bondage have been abolished. The right of all to share in the benefits of culture has made significant progress. In many countries the law recognizes the equality of men and women, the participation of all citizens in political life, and equal rights for all. Racism is rejected as contrary to law and justice. The formulation of human rights implies a clearer awareness of the dignity of all human beings. By comparison with previous systems of domination, the advances of freedom and equality in many societies are undeniable.<sup>13</sup>

In this area too there have been some unfortunate developments. In the socio-economic and political fields, the modern quest for freedom has given rise to the concept of man as a fully self-sufficient individual. The individualistic ideology based on this concept of man led to the unequal distribution of wealth at the beginning of the industrial era.<sup>14</sup> And this in turn caused the exclusion of workers from access to the essential goods which were produced by them and to which they had a right.<sup>15</sup> In reaction to this ideology and in defense

8. *Ibid.*  
12. CFL 8.

9. *Ibid.*  
13. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*  
14. CFL 13.

11. CFL 7.  
15. *Ibid.*

of the legitimate rights of the workers, some people have advocated the collectivist ideology, which has led to grave injustices and new forms of servitude.<sup>16</sup>

4. A third aspect of the modern liberation movement is the search for "inner freedom, in the form of freedom of thought and freedom of decision."<sup>17</sup> It seeks to free man from fear, superstition and the other obstacles to his development as well as to encourage him to use his reason boldly and fearlessly. This has brought about a remarkable progress especially in the historical and human sciences, which lead us to a deeper understanding of the process of personal growth and community development. But for many the quest for inner freedom paves the way to immorality and atheism, since morality is perceived as an irrational limit and the affirmation of God as incompatible with human freedom. In point of fact, says the Instruction,

When man wishes to free himself from the moral law and become independent of God, far from gaining his freedom he destroys it. Escaping the measuring rod of truth he falls prey to the arbitrary; fraternal relations between people are abolished and give place to terror, hatred and fear.<sup>18</sup>

All these facts indicate the ambiguity of the modern quest for liberation which holds out both the promise of true freedom and the threat of deadly forms of bondage.

5. What, then, is freedom? It is often believed that a person is free when he is able to do whatever he wishes, without being in any way hindered by external constraints.<sup>19</sup> Total independence from everyone and everything is seen as the necessary condition for freedom.

This is a wrong understanding of freedom, since man does not always know what he really wants and is often a prey to contradictory wishes. Besides, he cannot always do what he wants not only because of external obstacles but also because of the limits of his own being. Moreover, every person is oriented to other people whose company he needs. Hence, freedom is not achieved in total self-sufficiency, but only through reciprocal bonds that link people to one another. Man is essentially a social being and he realizes his freedom only in the context of the various communities to which he belongs!

6. Freedom is "the interior mastery of one's own acts and self-determination."<sup>20</sup> It is the ability to choose the good and finds its true meaning in the choice of the moral good. "By his free action, man must tend toward the supreme good through lesser goods which conform to the exigencies of his nature and his divine vocation."<sup>21</sup>

7. Human freedom is "a shared freedom."<sup>22</sup> Created by God in His image and likeness, man has received the gift of freedom. Hence the truth of his being is that he is a creature. Through the exercise of his freedom man shapes and forms himself, but he can do so only in the acknowledgement of his creatureliness. Hence,

16. *Ibid.*  
20. CFL 27.

17. CFL 8.  
21. *Ibid.*

18. CFL 19.  
22. CFL 29.

19. CFL 25.

His capacity for self-realisation is in no way suppressed by his dependence on God. It is precisely the characteristic of atheism to believe in an irreducible opposition between the causality of a divine freedom and that of man's freedom, as though the affirmation of God meant the negation of man, or as though God's intervention in history rendered vain the endeavours of man. In reality, it is from God and in relationship with him that human freedom takes its meaning and consistency.<sup>23</sup>

8. Human freedom is "finite and fallible."<sup>24</sup> It is possible for man to be drawn to an apparent good. But the choice of a false good is detrimental to the growth of true freedom. On the other hand, by his obedience to the divine law inscribed in his conscience and received as an impulse from the Holy Spirit, man learns to exercise a true mastery over himself, thus realizing his royal vocation as a child of God. The service of God and the practice of justice lead to the development of authentic freedom.

9. Such an understanding of freedom sheds light on liberation. Liberation involves all the processes which have as their goal the securing and guaranteeing of the conditions needed for the full exercise of authentic human freedom.<sup>25</sup> It is not true to say that liberation produces human freedom: liberation only strives to remove the obstacles and create better conditions for effective exercise of freedom. "Indeed a liberation which does not take into account the personal freedom of those who fight for it is condemned in advance to defeat."<sup>26</sup>

10. Christian faith enables people to grasp the depth of freedom and liberation. It shows that divine revelation is an enrichment of the human person and in no way hampers the freedom of thought which is a necessary condition for the search for truth. "By opening itself to divine truth, created reason experiences a blossoming and a perfection which is an eminent form of freedom."<sup>27</sup> In their faith, the believers, especially the little ones and the poor, know that they are enfolded in God's infinite love and that they are given a share in God's own knowledge. This knowledge frees "them from the dominating claims of the learned."<sup>28</sup>

11. In their experience of faith, the poor, who are the object of God's special love, "understand best and as it were instinctively that the most radical liberation, which is the liberation from sin and death, is the liberation accomplished by the Death and Resurrection of Christ."<sup>29</sup> The most fundamental meaning of liberation is the salvific one: "liberation from the radical bondage of evil and sin". This, in turn, has moral implications. For,

In the experience of salvation, man discovers the true meaning of his freedom, since liberation is the restoration of freedom. It is also education in freedom, that is to say, education in the right use of freedom. Thus, to the salvific dimension of liberation is linked its ethical dimension.<sup>30</sup>

12. The experience of this radical liberation has consequences for the totality of human existence. It penetrates and profoundly transforms

23. *Ibid.*

27. CFL 20.

24. CFL 30.

28. CFL 21.

25. CFL 31.

29. CFL 22.

26. *Ibid.*

30. CFL 23.

man and history in its present reality and animates his eschatological yearning<sup>31</sup> It exerts its influence on the culture and customs of people. Because of the formidable challenges of today, it becomes more than ever imperative that the love of God and freedom in truth and justice should characterize the relations between individuals and peoples and animate the life of cultures. For where truth and love are missing, the process of liberation results in the death of freedom. Hence, the Instruction maintains,

The liberating capacities of science, technology, work, economics and political activity will only produce results if they find their inspiration and measure in the truth and love which are stronger than suffering: the truth and love revealed to men by Jesus Christ.<sup>32</sup>

The notion of freedom and liberation explained above presupposes a particular view of man and society. Though the Instruction does not elaborate a complete anthropology it has dealt with some significant aspects of the Christian vision of man and society. A brief examination of these is necessary for a better understanding of freedom and liberation.

## II. Man and Society

1. The most basic truth about man is that he is a creature who has received his being as a gift from God. As the Scripture testifies, God created man in his own image and likeness (Gen 1:26). The image of God in man is the foundation of the freedom and dignity of the human person. Man's dignity stems also from the call to communion with God. For,

Man hears the call of his Creator in the inclination and aspiration of his own nature toward the good, and still more in the word of Revelation, which was proclaimed in a perfect manner in Christ. It is revealed to man that God created him free so that by grace man could enter into friendship with God and share his life.<sup>33</sup>

Creatureliness also implies finitude. Man often experiences the limits of his own nature. Since the obstacles to his freedom and growth do not always come from outside, but from the limits of his being, he must learn to harmonize his desires with the possibilities of his nature. Or else he would destroy himself.

2. An aspect of the image of God in man is his vocation to exercise dominion over the earth by putting it at his service through work.<sup>34</sup> As a bodily being man depends on the resources of the material world for his personal and social fulfilment. But he must use them and guard them wisely since he is not their creator and absolute master.

Man's efforts to exploit the resources of the world have led to a veritable revolution, scientific and technological. But the scientific and technological progress acquires its properly human meaning and value only when it is subordinated to moral principles. Otherwise i

31. *Ibid.*

32. CFL 24.

33. CFL 28.

34. CFL 34.

would only alienate. Hence, man is today challenged to master and control "by the use of his reason and freedom the forces which he puts to work in the service of the true purpose of human existence."<sup>35</sup>

3. By his very nature man is a social being; he can develop himself and realize his vocation only by relating to others. Man expresses his social nature by belonging to different communities: the family and professional and political communities. Since the human person is an active and responsible subject of social life, public recognition must be accorded to "every human being's character as a person responsible for himself and his transcendent destiny, as well as the inviolability of his conscience."<sup>36</sup> Society can in many ways contribute to the full blossoming of the human person; it can also be a threat and obstacle to the realisation of his destiny.

4. Without trying to advocate any particular system of society, the Instruction points out that the social order must be built on the foundation of the dignity of the human person and respect the principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity.<sup>37</sup> By virtue of the first, man is obliged to contribute to the common good of society at all levels. Hence all forms of social and political individualism are to be rejected. "By virtue of the second, neither the state nor any society must ever substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and of intermediate communities at the level of which they can function, nor must they take away the room necessary for their freedom."<sup>38</sup> This will rule out all forms of collectivism. Hence, only that form of society is just which respects the dignity and inviolable rights of the human person; which makes it possible for all actively to participate in its life and to make their contribution to the common good; which does not cater to the vested interests of individuals or groups; which creates conditions for the harmonious development of persons and the balanced growth of communities; which finally aids the temporal and eternal well-being of all.<sup>39</sup>

5. Man is a paradox. "In each person there lives a desire to be free. And yet this desire almost always tends towards slavery and oppression."<sup>40</sup> The radical reason for the tragedies that mark the modern history of freedom is to be found in man's sin. In his desire for absolute freedom and autonomy there lies hidden a temptation to deny the deepest truth about himself: his creaturely dependence on God, his Creator. By seeking total autonomy and self-sufficiency, he denies God and denies himself. "Alienation from the truth of his being as a creature loved by God is the root of all other forms of alienation."<sup>41</sup>

Denying his dependence on God and seeking self-fulfilment apart from God, man introduces a deep division into his own being—because he destroys the momentum of his aspiration to the Infinite. This

35. CFL 35.

36. CFL 32.

37. CFL 73.

38. *Ibid.*

39. See CFL 73; 32; 13; 75; 99.

40. CFL 37.

41. CFL 38.

profoundly disturbs his own order and interior balance. Culpable denial of God unleashes the passions which are the causes of imbalance and conflicts in the human heart. From this inevitably come disorders which affect the sphere of the family and society. By his sinful self-assertion and by his efforts to satisfy his desire for the infinite by the use of things even at the cost of violating the rights of others, "man makes his own contribution to the creation of those very structures of exploitation and slavery which he claims to condemn."<sup>42</sup>

Sin is both personal and social, though not in the same way. The Instruction expresses it:

The sin which is at the root of the unjust situations is, in a true and immediate sense, a voluntary act which has its source in the freedom of individuals. Only in a derived and secondary sense is it applicable to structures and only in this sense can one speak of "social sin".<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, structures which are institutions and practices created by human beings in order to orientate and organize economic, social and political life do acquire in course of time certain autonomy. They often tend to become "fixed and fossilize as mechanisms relatively independent of the human will, therefore paralyzing or distorting social development and causing injustice." Hence, we can legitimately "speak of structures marked by sin".

### III. The Liberating Mission of the Church

1. The Church is acutely conscious of the contemporary quest for freedom and liberation and wishes to make this quest her own. There is in the world today a growing awareness of the dignity and freedom of the human person and an affirmation of his inalienable rights. There is also a clearer perception of the many obstacles which stand in the way of man's growth in freedom. Within the nations there are situations of oppression and exploitation. And between nations there exist the inequality of power relationships. All this is at the source of the powerful aspirations to liberation which are working in our world. As the Instruction notes with joy,

One of the major phenomena of our time, of continental proportions, is the awakening of the consciousness of the people, who, bent beneath the weight of age-old poverty, aspire to a life in dignity and justice and are prepared to fight for their freedom.<sup>44</sup>

The Church is determined to respond to the anxiety of contemporary man as he endures oppression and yearns for freedom. But she will do so in her own way and with her own resources.

2. The basis of the Church's commitment to liberation is God's liberating activity in the world. The Bible is a record of his activity in Judaeo-Christian history. In the Old Testament it is in the Exodus

42. CFL. 42. 43. CFL 75. 44. CFL 74. 45. CFL 1; 61. 46. CFL

that the liberating action of God shines out most clearly. He frees his people from intolerable economic, political and cultural slavery and establishes with them a Covenant of love. It is only in this covenantal relationship with God that they can find the fullness of freedom. As the Instruction points out,

The major and fundamental event of the Exodus therefore has a meaning which is both religious and political. God sets his people free and gives their descendants, a land and a law, but within a covenant and for a covenant. One cannot therefore isolate the political aspect for its own sake; it has to be considered in the light of a plan of a religious nature within which it is integrated.<sup>47</sup>

The Exodus and the Covenant have implications for the life of Israel. As part of his plan of salvation God gave his people its Law which was to govern their religious and civil life. What constitutes the core of the Law is love of God above all things and love of neighbour as oneself. But justice that should mark the relations between people also belongs to the substance of the Biblical Law. Israel's special concern for the poor, the needy, the widow and the orphan is based on the conviction that they have a right to justice according to the juridical ordinances of the people of God. In the Biblical perspective, "the situation of the poor is a situation of injustice contrary to the Covenant."<sup>48</sup> That is why the Prophets make themselves God's spokesmen for the poor and denounce the injustice done to them. While reminding Israel of the demands of the Covenant God and condemning their repeated transgressions, the Prophets foretell a New Covenant and the advent of the Messiah who will defend the poor and the oppressed.

3. It is in Jesus Christ that God's liberating intervention in human history reaches its climax. By announcing the advent of the Kingdom of God and by preaching the good news to the poor, Jesus reveals his messianic action in favour of those who expect salvation from God. Becoming poor for our sake he wishes to identify himself with the poor and those who suffer or are persecuted. But it is in the Paschal Mystery that the most radical liberation of humankind occurs. Through his perfect obedience on the cross and his glorious resurrection Jesus Christ saved us from sin and opened the way to definitive liberation.<sup>49</sup>

While Christ has liberated us from the power of sin and death, here on earth we do not experience the fullness of freedom. It is true that in the justification by grace received through faith and the sacraments Christians receive the forgiveness of sin and are restored to communion with God. In Christ we have the power to overcome our sinfulness and the promise of resurrection is a pointer to the final destruction of death. But as long as the mystery of iniquity endures, Christian existence is a spiritual struggle against the slavery of sin. Deep within himself the Christian experiences the conflict between the Law of the Spirit and the law of the flesh which often

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<sup>47</sup>. CFL 44.

<sup>48</sup>. CFL 46.

<sup>49</sup>. CFL 51.



renders his powerless to choose the good.<sup>50</sup> This lack of harmony and this inner weakness do not destroy man's freedom and responsibility but they do have a debilitating influence. Man must constantly strive in the power of the Spirit for his total liberation.

4. The Gospel which the Church is sent to proclaim is a message of freedom and liberation, since it not only announces the definitive liberation effected by God in Jesus Christ but also challenges people to engage in the work of liberation. "By restoring man's true freedom, the radical liberation brought about by Christ assigns to him a task: Christian practice, which is the putting into practice of the great commandment of love."<sup>51</sup> The New Testament bears witness to the centrality of this love in the Christian scheme of things and points to "the inexhaustible richness of sentiments included in the Christian love of neighbour."<sup>52</sup>

There is an intrinsic connection between love and justice. As the Instruction notes,

Evangelical love and the vocation to be children of God to which we are called, have as a consequence the direct and imperative requirement of respect for all human beings in their rights to life and to dignity. There is no gap between love of neighbour and desire for justice.<sup>53</sup>

It is this realisation that has prompted the Church to go forward faithfully along the paths to authentic liberation. It is this that has inspired vast numbers of Christians down the ages to commit themselves to the liberation of human beings from every form of oppression and to the promotion of their dignity. The injustice and oppression that afflict millions of people today openly contradict the Gospel of Christ and therefore will disturb the conscience of every Christian.

5. The Gospel is also a message of hope, since it brings with it the promise of resurrection, the fullness of freedom, the transformation of the cosmos and the final realisation of the Kingdom of God.<sup>54</sup> Far from weakening man's commitment to the progress of the earthly city, the eschatological hope gives him an added reason for it.

While earthly progress is to be carefully distinguished from the growth of the Kingdom, this distinction is not to be understood as separation, for man's vocation to eternal life does not suppress but confirms his duty to develop temporal life by making the best use of the resources the Creator has put at his disposal. The shape of the City to come is deeply affected by man's efforts to build the earthly city. Hence, the Gospel "challenges man and societies to overcome situations of sin and injustice and to establish conditions of true freedom", thus paving the way for the complete realization of the Kingdom of God.<sup>55</sup>

50. CFL 54.

51. CFL 71.

52. CFL 55; cf. 1 Thess 2:7-12; Phil 2:1-4; Gal 2:12-20; 1 Cor 13:4-7; 2 Jn 12; 3 Jn 14; Jn 11:1-5, 35-36; Mk 6:34; 18:21 ff.

53. CFL 57.

54. CFL 58-60.

55. CFL 60.

The Beatitudes, read and interpreted in their total context, reveal the spirit of the coming Kingdom. "But, in the light of the definitive destiny of human history thus manifested, there simultaneously appear with more vivid clarity the foundations of justice in the temporal order."<sup>56</sup> By relating it to the transcendent order, the Beatitudes give the temporal order its true measure without in any way diminishing its nature and importance.

While asking man not to worship earthly goods or practise injustice in the unbridled pursuit of mundane things, the Beatitudes encourage him to commit himself to the temporal tasks of service to the neighbour and to the human community.

6. In the light of what has been said so far, the mission of the Church can be formulated as the promotion of "the integral salvation of the world."<sup>57</sup> The Church has been sent to proclaim and work for the salvation of humankind. Through the Church's ministry of the word of God and the sacraments, human beings are freed from the power of sin and Satan and brought into fellowship with God. But the love which impels the Church to communicate divine life to people also causes her, through the effective action of her members, to promote an integral liberation from all that prevents their growth as human persons.<sup>58</sup>

It is in fidelity to this mission that the Church advocates justice among people and condemns every form of oppression; that she exhorts the faithful laity to engage in the promotion of freedom and justice; that she opposes any attempt to create a new social order without God; and that she finally rejects all political movement which seek to fight poverty and oppression according to the theories and methods contrary to the Gospel.<sup>59</sup> The Church cannot allow her mission to be reduced to a mere temporal project. Hence, she points to the unity and distinction between evangelisation and human promotion: "unity because she seeks the good of the whole person; distinction because these two tasks enter in different ways into her mission."<sup>60</sup>

7. It is in this context that the Instruction deals with the Church's preferential option for the poor.<sup>61</sup> Following the example of Jesus Christ who chose a state of poverty and deprivation and identified himself with the poor and the needy, Christians must have a special concern for those who lack what is necessary for human life in the world. Poverty is an evil from which human beings must be liberated as totally as possible. That is why the Church, down the centuries, has, in spite of some failures, practised a love of preference for the poor and sought to liberate them from their misery. But this special option for the poor should not smack of any particularism or sectarianism. Nor should it be a partisan choice, which will go against the universality of the Church's being and mission. In fact the

56. CFL 62.

59. CFL 64, 65.

57. CFL 63.

60. CFL 64.

58. *Ibid.*

61. CFL 66-68.

option excludes no one, just as Jesus' preferential love for the poor did not prevent him from associating himself with the "publicans and sinners" who were rich in earthly goods and were excluded by the community of the just. Like their Lord and Master, Christians should have a compassionate concern for all who suffer human misery, material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illnesses.

8. In order to remove poverty and secure freedom and justice for all, it is imperative "to work simultaneously for the conversion of hearts and improvement of structures."<sup>62</sup> The first step in the creation of an economic and social order that will truly be at the service of man is the effort to bring about an inner conversion of people by appealing to their spiritual and moral capacities. To give priority to structures and technical organization over the human person and his dignity is to subscribe to a materialistic anthropology. However, the primacy accorded to the freedom of the person and the conversion of heart in no way goes against the obvious need to transform unjust structures. The Instruction unhesitatingly asserts,

It is therefore perfectly legitimate that those who suffer oppression on the part of the wealthy or the politically powerful should take action, through morally licit means, in order to secure structures and institutions in which their rights will be truly respected.<sup>63</sup>

But the undeniable fact of corruption that affects leaders and the state bureaucracy in many countries shows that mere structural change is not sufficient to ensure freedom and justice for all. To usher in a just order of society both conversion of heart and transformation of structures are necessary.

9. The struggle for justice, if it is to be really effective, demands clarity of goal and correctness of methods.<sup>64</sup> Those who engage in a struggle against an unjust society must clearly aim at the establishment of a new social and political order, which is in conformity with the demands of freedom and justice. The mere abolition of an unjust situation is not enough. Every stage in this process must be marked with justice. There is such a thing as the morality of means.

The systematic use of violence as a necessary path to liberation is not acceptable to the Christians. In extreme cases, which can only be determined after a rigorous analysis of the situations, recourse to such struggle is permissible "as a last resort to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny which is gravely damaging the fundamental rights of individuals and the common good".<sup>65</sup> Even here it may not be advisable to have recourse to violence, because of the continual development of the technology of mass destruction and the danger of a spiral of violence. Hence, the Instruction prefers "passive resistance" as a strategy for social change.

I have so far given a rather brief summary of the Instruction. I

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62. CBL 75.

63. *Ibid.*

64. CFL 78.

65. CFL 79.

make no claims to completeness, since many important ideas have been left aside. I have said nothing about the civilization of love, the civilization of work, education for solidarity, cultural transformation and the international order which are all developed at some length in the Instruction.<sup>66</sup> Nor have I dealt with what the document has to say about inculturation, popular piety, sense of faith, theological reflection, basic Christian communities and the inspiring example of the Virgin of the Magnificat, all of which are of great significance for the Church.<sup>67</sup> All the same, I believe that I have culled together the main ideas about the theme of the Instruction—freedom and liberation.

#### IV. Critical Evaluation

1. The Instruction shows great sensitivity to the upsurge of freedom and liberation in the modern world.<sup>68</sup> This upsurge is the result of the growing awareness of the dignity and rights of the human person on the one hand, and the clear perception of the many obstacles which stand in the way of the realization of human dignity and freedom on the other. The document readily acknowledges the existence of injustice and oppression within nations and between nations. Hence the full exercise of freedom demands profound changes in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres of human existence. Since injustices are caused by the unjust structures of society as well as the sinful tendencies of the human heart, work for liberation should aim both at personal conversion and the transformation of structures. And the Instruction fully approves of the liberation movements of the oppressed as long as they use morally licit means.

2. The Instruction clarifies the Church's role in the process of liberation.<sup>69</sup> The Church is firmly determined to respond to modern man's quest for freedom and his aspiration for liberation. In fact, she makes this quest and this aspiration her own. For her mission is to promote the integral salvation of humankind, a salvation which has this-worldly as well as other-worldly dimensions. To work for the temporal well-being of individuals and societies is part and parcel of her mission. The core of the Christian message is the radical liberation from sin and death brought about by God in Jesus Christ. And the supreme rule of life for the Christian is the new commandment of love. Effective love demands the creation of a new social order in which all can live in freedom and dignity and work for their complete human fulfilment.

3. In this connection the Instruction explains the nature of the social doctrine of the Church. "The social teaching of the Church is born of the encounter of the Gospel message and of its demands summarized in the supreme commandment of the love of God and neighbour in

66. See CFL 81-94.

68. CFL 1; 61.

67. See CFL 96; 22; 98; 70; 69; 97;

69. See CFL 61-65.

justice with the problems emanating from the life of the society."<sup>70</sup> It is essentially action oriented and provides us with a set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgement and directives for action. In a fast changing world there cannot be a fully worked out social doctrine of the Church. "Far from constituting a closed system, it remains constantly open to new questions which continually arise; it requires the contribution of all charisms, experiences and skills."<sup>71</sup> This is why the Instruction leaves it to the local churches to discern in the light of Gospel and the social doctrine of the Church the option that are called for in their concrete situations. And that is why it speaks appreciatively of the basic Christian communities which are credible witnesses to evangelical love and of the theological reflection which developed from a particular experience highlights aspects of the Word not yet fully grasped.<sup>72</sup>

4. With regard to the use of violence the document takes a nuanced position.<sup>73</sup> While rejecting the systematic recourse to violence as a necessary path to liberation and admitting the legitimacy of armed struggle as a last resort in extreme cases, it shows a clear awareness that violence does not always come from the oppressed. It unhesitatingly condemns "violence exercised by the powerful against the poor, arbitrary action by the police, and any form of violence established as a system of government."<sup>74</sup> It also disapproves of "crimes such as reprisals against the general population, torture, or methods of terrorism and deliberate provocation aimed at causing deaths during popular demonstrations," whether perpetuated by the established power or by insurgents.<sup>75</sup> Besides, it regards as detestable smear campaigns that can destroy a person psychologically or morally. In fact, the marginalisation of people from social, cultural and political life, and the curtailment of their rights under the pretext of public order or by "the alleged principle of national security, or a narrowly economic outlook, or a totalitarian concept of social life" seem to constitute a form of violence.<sup>76</sup>

5. The Instruction's stand on the involvement of priests in politics is not clear. On the one hand it gives a word of encouragement to "pastors and all those who, as priests, laity, or men and women religious, often work under very difficult conditions for evangelization and integral human development."<sup>77</sup> On the other hand it maintains: "It is not for the pastors of the Church to intervene directly in the political construction and organization of social life."<sup>78</sup> What does this statement mean? Read in the context of the whole document, the statement seems to imply: 1. It is perfectly alright for priests to to engage in all those activities that are demanded by the Church's mission and commitment to the integral liberation of humankind. Since the full exercise of freedom demands certain economic, social, political and cultural conditions, it is part of mission of the Church to work for the establishment of such conditions, and priests may

70. CFL 72.

71. *Ibid.*

72. CFL 69; 70.

73. CFL 76.

74. *Ibid.*

75. CFL 79.

76. CFL 95.

77. CFL 98.

78. CFL 80.

legitimately be involved in this work. Already in the Instruction on Certain Aspects of Theology of Liberation, the Sacred Congregation spoke appreciatively of the "many priests, religious and lay people who are consecrated in a truly evangelical way for the creation of a just society."<sup>79</sup> 2. Priests should not be directly involved in the political running of society. This is very similar to the prescription of Canon Law forbidding priests "to assume public office whenever it means sharing in the exercise of civil power."<sup>80</sup> Since this law is not absolute, it must be left to the local churches and national episcopal conferences to discern if, because of the peculiar situation prevailing in their country, some priests should be allowed to hold public office.

6. The Instruction's approach to the liberation movements in today's world appears to be quite parochial. What it highlights in the modern quest for freedom are the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Age of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.<sup>81</sup> While these may have exerted considerable influence on a global scale, they clearly belong to the history of the West. It does not seem to occur to the authors of the document that significant events and movements in other parts of the world may have contributed to modern man's awakening freedom and liberation.

Something similar must be said of the claim that the contemporary quest for freedom and aspiration to liberation have their first source in the Christian heritage.<sup>82</sup> At a time when the world is fast becoming a global village and there is talk of wider ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, it is strange that a Church document does not even suspect that other religions and cultures may have given rise to liberation movements at least in some parts of the world. As far as India is concerned, we can say that from the days of the Buddha there have been many counter cultural movements which sought liberation, understood in the world-view prevalent in our religio-cultural tradition.<sup>83</sup>

7. The Instruction does not show sufficient awareness of the pilgrim status of the Church. It claims that the Church possesses the truth about God and man.<sup>84</sup> This attitude of confident possession of the truth does not fit well with a Church which is on the way to the fullness of truth. Nor does it allow her to be a learning Church in open dialogue with the other religious and cultural traditions of humanity. But Vatican II manifests a different mentality when it declares:

Just as it is in the world's interest to acknowledge the Church as a social reality and a driving force in history, so too the Church is not unaware how

79. See XI, 18.

80. Canon 285 § 3.

81. See CFL 6.

82. CFL 5.

83. See D.V. ATHALYE, *Neo-Hinduism*, Bombay, 1932; V.F. VINEETH, "The Hindu Religion and the Struggle for a New Society" in D.S. AMALORPAVADOS (ed.) *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Bangalore, 1981, pp. 263 ff; S. KAPPEN, *Jesus and Cultural Revolution*, Bombay, 1983 esp. pp. 34 ff.

84. See CFL 3.

much it has profited from the history and development of mankind. It profits from the experience of past ages, from the progress of the sciences, and from the riches hidden in various cultures, through which greater light is thrown on the nature of man and new avenues to truth are opened up.<sup>85</sup>

8. The Instruction seems to betray signs of dichotomous thinking when it speaks of "the unity and distinction between evangelisation and human promotion."<sup>86</sup> If such a position is adopted in order to point out that the Church's mission cannot be reduced to a merely this-worldly project of socio-economic and political liberation, then it is quite right to do so. But if it is meant to signify that in addition to her proper religious mission of promoting the supernatural salvation of individuals, the Church has also the task of working for human liberation, then it reveals a dichotomous, and not a holistic, approach to the mission of the Church.<sup>87</sup> The whole thrust of God's saving intervention in history, as witnessed to in the Bible, and of Christ's commitment to the Kingdom of God is precisely this: God is concerned with the totality of human life and the entirety of human history. And the Church's mission is to collaborate with God in his project for humankind. The Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 1971, brought this out when it declared:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.<sup>88</sup>

9. The Instruction appears to water down the import of the Church's preferential option for the poor.<sup>89</sup> In its eagerness to embrace all and exclude no one, it explains the phrase in such a way that there is neither preference nor option for the poor. What it asks for is compassionate concern for all who suffer human misery. Originally, option for the poor was option for a new society.<sup>90</sup> It was based on the conviction that poverty is not primarily caused by the wickedness of a few rich people, but by the operation of a socio-economic and political system that permits the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small minority, reducing the majority of the people to misery and want. Hence the removal of poverty requires not merely a conversion of heart, but a transformation of the unjust system. Since the new society that is to be ushered in is for all—the rich and the poor—option for the poor does not exclude any one. But it does imply taking sides with the poor and the oppressed who according to the Bible are the mediators of salvation for all,<sup>91</sup> and who because of

85. GS 44.

86. CFL 64.

87. See K. KUNNUMPURAM, "Evangelisation in India Today" in *Human Liberation in the Indian Context*, edited by J.D.V. S. Students' Council, Pune, 1983, pp. 174 ff.

88. *Justice in the World*, 6.

89. See CLF 68.

90. See "Medellin Documents: Peace", in J. Gremillion, *The Gospel of Peace and Justice*, pp 455-463; D. Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, Dublin, 1983, esp. pp 3-6.

91. See G.M. Soares-Prabhu, "Class in the Bible: The Biblical Poor as Social Class?" in *Vidyaajyoti* (August 1985), pp. 322-346, esp. 336-342.

their experience of poverty and oppression can be the builders of the new, just and fraternal society.

10. This lack of definiteness with regard to the option for the poor has led the Instruction to take an ambiguous stand on the question of social change.<sup>92</sup> While it exhorts people "to work simultaneously for the conversion of hearts and the improvement of structures," it seeks to give priority to the conversion of hearts. While the Instruction stoutly defends the right of the oppressed to strive to secure structures and institutions in which their rights will be truly respected, it shows little awareness of the tremendous impact that social structures have on the people, shaping their mind-sets and value systems. That is why the Instruction gives priority to the conversion of hearts. It does not seem to realize that often it is almost impossible for the majority of people to change their minds and hearts unless the structures of society have been altered. Such is the power that social structures have on human beings! On the other hand, it is human beings who have to bring about the transformation of structures. Hence it would be more correct to say that there is a dialectical relationship between change of structures and conversion of hearts rather than give priority to either.

11. What the Instruction has said about liberation in the world raises questions about liberation in the Church. Speaking about the structures of society the document asserts that "they often tend to become fixed and fossilised as mechanisms relatively independent of the human will, thereby paralysing or distorting social development and causing injustice."<sup>93</sup> Is this also true of the structures of the Church? The apparent answer is no, since the structures of the Church are derived from Christ. But modern research has shown that there has been considerable evolution in the structures of the Church during the period of the New Testament itself.<sup>94</sup> In fact, the early Christian communities manifested a remarkable variety in community organization and leadership patterns. And Vatican II admits that the visible structure of the Church has been enriched by the evolution of social life in the world.<sup>95</sup> If some of the structures of the Church were shaped by human beings to meet the challenging needs of a particular time, and if they are today experienced by Christians as "distorting" human growth and "causing injustice", then there is a strong case for demanding the transformation of these structures of the Church.

Besides, the document advocates the principle of subsidiarity as necessary for a just social order.<sup>96</sup> Should not this principle be faith-

92. See CLF 75.

93. CLF 74.

94. See J.G. Dunn, "Models of Christian Community in the New Testament" in A. Bittlinger (ed.) *The Church is Charismatic Renewal*, Geneva, 1981, pp. 91-116; R.E. Brown, *The Churches The Apostles Left Behind*, New York, 1984.

95. See GS 44.

96. See CFL 73.



fully applied in the administration of the Church? Has not the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith often violated it? In the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, held in Rome in November-December 1985, Archbishop Denis Hurley, head of the South African Bishops' Conference stated:

Local churches are trusted with the vast burden of evangelization in all its dimensions, but when it comes to even minor matters of Church law or doctrine, the same trust is not always in evidence. Our conference calls for a clearer recognition of the principle of subsidiarity.<sup>97</sup>

12. All in all, it can be confidently asserted that the Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation has vindicated the main concerns of liberation theology. It has not taken back the criticisms the Congregation raised against certain forms of liberation theology in a previous Instruction.<sup>98</sup> In fact, many of them are found in the new document, but in the larger context of a positive and comprehensive approach to freedom and liberation.

This raises the question: was it wise to publish the earlier document which is mostly negative? Could not the Congregation have waited for about 20 months and issued one Instruction instead of two? Because of the wide publicity given to the first Instruction harm has been done to the cause of liberation as well as to the reputation of the Congregation. One wonders if the present document will get the same publicity.

97. As reported in *The Examiner*, (January 11, 1986), p. 36.

98. See CFL 1.

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## Correspondence

Dear Editor,

Remarks seemingly irrelevant to the papal visit are quoted in the article of Fr Gaspert-Sauch as being a critique of the Indian Church by the French press. It is difficult to determine whether they are reported approvingly or not.

The real oppressed of the Church are the Christians of SC and ST origin; they could rightly be called the 'poor relatives' of the Church community. Their 'anguished search for equality and dignity' has yet to find any realistic response. Strangely, the foreign media would apply these words to the 'orientals', who are presently the most-privileged people within the Church in India.

Education for the middle-classes is a phenomenon of the cities; the vast effort of the Church is in the villages, where the Church schools are the liberating force and hope for the SC and ST people.

The foreign press has still to learn the real Indian Church: of missionaries in deep rural areas; of priests, sisters and others least bothered about the inter-ritual quarrel of bishops; of people striving for dignity and being marginalised by the powers-that-be; of the internal colonisation of under-developed areas by the more advanced communities of India; of the oppression and injustice suffered by weaker sections due to 'development plans'.

It will take a long time before the voice of the 'dalit' is heard.

Catholic Church,  
Koraput, Orissa.

M. SUBHASUNDER

# Book Reviews

## Liberation Theology

*After so much has been written even in the press about liberation theology our readers may be keen to have clear and reliable introductions to this movement. While the book of Witvliet presented here describes at some length the themes and methodology in the three major areas of Latin America, Africa and Asia, the books of Fern introduce us more directly to the architects of these theologies and provide us with chosen readings on their key areas of thought. Complementing each other these three books provide an excellent introduction for serious readers.*

**A Place in the Sun. An Introduction to Liberation Theology in the Third World.** By Theo WITVLIET. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, and London, SCM Press, 1985. Pp. ix-182. \$ 8.95.

This book is a fine introduction to liberation theology. The author is a deep, perceptive and critical thinker. The title of the book points to its contents and approach. In the Northern parts of Europe, as in the author's Holland, sunlight is a scarce and precious resource. The expression "a place in the sun" refers to a favourable or advantageous position of prominence or recognition. But it is also used, especially in situations of poverty and oppression, when persons are claiming their right to live in dignity and freedom. Liberation theologies throughout the world have their source and sustenance in this struggle—the struggle of the poor for "a place in the sun".

The author realizes that telling the story of grappling with this struggle cannot remain simply on "uncommitted tour of Third World theology". He is keenly aware that the encounter with liberation theologies in other continents is not just a confrontation with people in different situations, "but, through them, with ourselves, with our own social commitment. We are asked about our own involvement in the struggle over issues of class, race and sex that is going on in our society." That can discomfit some

people—even theologians. He adds: "I am convinced that a survey of the very different forms of liberation theology in other continents is an excellent way for us indirectly to come to terms with the fact that our own theological activity is determined by the society in which we live—and I see the discovery of this fact as a precondition of our arriving at liberating, living forms of theology in our own situation." One of the features of the book that I found encouraging was the fact that Witvliet really sets out to understand the work of theologians in the "Third World".

The first chapter deals with what the author calls "The Historical Context." In it he tells us how the 'Third World' became just that. We see at once that we are up against an ideological construct which "displays a structure of understanding/misunderstanding." In other words the use of terms like 'Third World', 'undeveloped' or 'developing countries' does not really give an adequate picture of the reality to which they refer. They tell us more about what we imagine to be our relationship with "what goes on out there." What went on, of course, was a lot of exploitation. In this chapter Witvliet also treats of the part that missions played in the process of exploration and exploitation, which poses two basic questions: 1) "How far have missionary practices and ideas formed an integral part of the process of the extension of colonial and imperialist power?" (2) "How far has missionary activity achieved the liberation of men and women from structures of domination and dependence in obedience to the gospel as a story of liberation from slavery?" This leads into what is called "the other story." Not the story from the past of the conquerors but rather from the past of the conquered. This section is a thrust of a theological surgeon's blade into the flesh of the subject. He uses the debate that Bartolomé de las Casas had with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda about whether the tribals of the Indies were human and had a soul. The argument was theological on both sides, though with a big difference!

Sepúlveda argues from dogma, using a mass of quotations and clothing his argument with the authority of tradition. Las Casas shows himself equally capable of subtle distinctions and long quotations. But he begins his argument with a sentence which breaks through the academic and learned discussion of his opponent. He notes that the consequence of Sepúlveda's position is "the loss of countless human lives and the depopulation of more than two thousand miles of land." A "theology" which allows and enables such thing to happen cannot be right! The intellectualism of Sepúlveda and others obscured their view of reality: they did not see the Indian. With this we are already into one of the themes of liberation theology. Gutiérrez has seen in this sentence of Las Casas a "methodological significance." What this means is "that the criterion of truth in theological argument does not lie in the theoretical argumentation but in its practical effect and consequence." Fr Aidon Nicole, the Dominican who presented the Instruction of the SCDF to the British press, calls this "the belief that verifications of a theological formulation depends upon its agreement with the actual liberating process that God is bringing about in history." (Cf. *New Blackfriars* 65 [1984], p. 456). This, of course, is something that many 'First World' theologians find difficult.

The author goes further into this in his second chapter on "The Epistemological Break." He clearly sees that what the practitioners of liberation theology are proposing is not new themes but a new way of doing theology. Liberation theology, in other words, is "not just reflection on the concept of liberation; it is concerned with the way in which theology can have a liberating function, or, to put it more accurately, in which theology can function in a praxis of liberation." The author then quotes the EATWOT Statement of the 1976 Dar-es-Salaam meeting and discusses the questions of contextuality, the relation between theory and praxis, and the criticism of ideology. He then deals with the break and the continuity that the method of liberation theology presents. He sees again that we are not dealing "with a cheap anti-intellectualism," and moves on to some European reactions to liberation theology.

In the chapters that follow he deals successively with Black Theology (in the USA and South Africa); with African

Theology and Liberation from Cultural and Religious Domination; with Theology in the Caribbean and the Rastafarian Movement; with Latin American Liberation Theology; and finally, with Asian Theology in the Context of Other Religions.

The chapters are striking in as much as they reveal that liberation theology is far from being monolithic and that it means different things in different places.

Nowhere in the book does the author discuss the SCDF *Instruction on Certain Aspects of 'Liberation Theology'*. However, the whole book may be taken as a discussion of many of the questions raised in that document, although—may I be pardoned—with a great deal more of insight and understanding than is shown by the Instruction. Witvliet has in fact written an exploratory essay of the history of contemporary theology in the non-European continents. He himself describes his effort as "no more than a guidebook, something which comes midway between a survey and an interpretation."

If you are looking for a book to open up the field of liberation theology, I recommend this little volume. It merits a place in all pastoral libraries. Mr John Bowden is to be thanked for one more excellent translation.

ROMAN LEWICKI, S. J.

*Third World Liberation Theologies. An Introductory Survey.* By Deane William FERM. Pp. ix-150. \$ 10.95.

*Third World Liberation Theologies. A Reader.* Edited by Dean William FERM. Pp. ix-386 \$ 16.95.

Both books by Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, 1986.

These books together provide an excellent introduction to those types of theology which are characterized by a distinct emphasis upon the complex, diverse and concrete reality of oppression and liberation, a specific methodology in the process of doing theology and their emergence from that world where the majority of the Christian community will live in a few years.

In the *Introductory Survey*, FERM describes liberation theologies in three parts of the world—Latin America, Africa and Asia and concludes with a final chapter on "Liberation Theology and its Critics." He does not include

US Black Theology, though this is a form of liberation theology.

In a short historical survey the author places liberation theology of LA within its concrete background—the history of Latin America and that constellation of elements which formed the soil in which it grew and from which it emerged—Vatican II, the recent social encyclicals, Medellín, the basic Christian communities and the influence of 'Che' Guevara, Camilo Torres, Helder Camara and Christians for Socialism.

The longest chapter is a brief introduction to the particular thought and influence of leading figures belonging to various tendencies and aspects of L.Th. in the LA world—Gutierrez, Segundo, Alves, Boff, Assmann, Miranda, Bonino, Sobrino, Comblin, Dussel, Galilea, Cardenal, Perez-Esclarin, Libanio, Croatto, Tamez, Maduro, Erskine, Couch, Hanks, Richard, Scannone and Esquivel. He concludes with a short summary of Puebla and the Vatican Resistance. In this survey of the LA theologians the place of Marxism and Marxian analysis is evaluated where relevant, the diverse attitudes to Scripture are highlighted and the types of Christology explained. Other liberation theologians and critics, especially from Africa, point out a lack of attention to women racial oppression, and the plight of the racial minorities among LA theologians.

In the following chapters we become more aware of the differences in L.Th. because of its origin in diverse, concrete situations with their challenges and problems. African L.Th. is marked in South Africa by Apartheid, injustice and the emergence of a black consciousness—the question of race. In other parts of Africa liberation from cultural-religious oppression emerges as the dominant factor and the search is for the integration of indigenous African religious traditions.

The Asian scene is more diverse because of the complex differences between the nations. The author surveys the thought of a few theologians from Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Sri Lanka (Balasuriya, Pieris) and Indonesia, and many more from the Philippines, Korea and India (Rayan, K. Matthew Kurian, Kappen, Amirtham, Mar Osthathios, Chandran, Samartha). Here the issues of oppression, poverty, justice, religious pluralism and culture are the dominant themes.

The final chapter, "Liberation Theology and its Critics" is well done as the author critiques the biased opponents of this theological movement and underlines the justified criticisms of others who are critical yet knowledgeable of and open to liberation theology. He emphasizes the difficulty of finding a language which does justice to immanence and transcendence, and the problem of the dichotomy between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith, the "here and now" and the final and definitive love, of neighbour and love of God. There is also the tentative character of some hermeneutics, the limits of the various theologies and the criticisms made by African and Asian theologians.

We are left with a sense of the rich diversity of this whole movement and an awareness of major ideas and trends. The book includes rich bibliographical material for further study. This is a very fine survey. The survey of LA and Africa is more extensive and richer than that of Asian thinkers. The Indian section will not be satisfactory to Indian readers, but they will be introduced to the thought of other nations.

The second book, *A Reader* provides readings that illustrate the diversity and distinctiveness of the thought, approaches and emphases of the leading liberation theologians from the same three areas of the world. Not all the thinkers surveyed in the *Introductory Survey* have been included. However, the choice has highlighted the significant thought, method, growth, emphases and critiques which characterize L.Th. in LA, Africa and Asia. Extracts from Mar Osthathios and Samuel Rayan represent India's contribution.

For readers looking for a balanced, reliable and informative introduction to L.Th. and wanting to be stimulated in their own theological thinking we highly recommend these two companion volumes and the book of Witvliet. Probably no better introductions exist.

P.M. MEAGHER S.J.

*Materialist Approaches to the Bible.* By Michel CLEVENOT. Translated by William J. NOTTINGHAM. *Marykholl, New York, Orbis, 1985.* Pp. xii-148, \$ 8.95.

The translator explains the meaning of the word "materialist" in the title in these words: " 'Materialist' refers to the view of history and culture that Marxist

social theory has popularized. It means that all consciousness is produced materially or by the material conditions in which people live, particularly by the kind of work they do and the social class to which they belong." In the light of this there are various approaches to the Bible. The present approach (or actually approaches) is fundamentally "sympathetic to the person of Jesus and to the prophetic movement to which he belongs. It is a materialist reading expressing the Christian faith, a combination that is not at all incongruous in the light of the gospel this reading finds in the liberating practice of Jesus" (ix).

In his methodology the author is greatly indebted to Belo's *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (VIDYAJYOTI 1982, 246ff). Acknowledging the heaviness and complexity of that book, the author wishes to make the materialist approaches accessible to the larger public.

The book is divided into two distinct parts. The first studies the conditions under which the OT arose. The author concentrates on the primary factors in this process, namely the economic, political and ideological influences. In Ch I he sketches the historical development of the OT, from the oldest traditions of the North and South of Palestine, prior to the rise of the Kings. The subsequent chapters (2.3.4. and 5) describe the production of the 4 documents—J and the united Kingdom; E and D and the prophetic milieu of the North and their fundamental insight summarized as "the system of gifts"; P and the post-exilic priestly caste with their disastrous system of purity which eliminated the prophetic current. The final chapter describes briefly the class struggle in first-century Palestine, i.e. in the Jesus Period.

The basic positive aspect of these brief chapters (50 pages) is the constant reminder of the crucial influence of economic, political and ideological factors in the production of the OT text. Studies of specific texts can be found in W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, *God of the Lowly* (VIDYAJYOTI 1985, 423-24). Apart from the fact that the author's survey is a great simplification of a long and complicated process, my basic criticisms of this part would be the following. The author has carved up the OT into disparate pieces and has only focused on the "materialist" factors in the production, omitting the fact of the

on-going experience of the Divine. The OT as a whole, in the long process of production, continuously re-interprets itself. To say that the priestly redaction, with its exaggerated emphasis on the magical character of purity and on cultic legalism (both loaded terms), eliminated the prophetic and was at the service of the powerful to crush the poor, is difficult to substantiate. At no point does Clevenot mention the scholarly debate about the documentary hypothesis. The OT has become a book which reveals the socio-economic and political world in which it arose. However, that is not the OT as Scripture, and the texts and traditions transcend any one movement of Jewish history in the process of being incorporated into the canon. Finally we find the description of first century Palestine too scanty to be of great use, with an over-emphasis on the "dismal poverty of the population" and question the interpretation of Jn 1:42 to justify the claim that Peter was a terrorist.

The substantial part of the book (pp. 53-128) is a study of Mark, using materialist approaches. The author uses a methodology which is dependent on aspects of modern linguistic analysis and on the Marxist analysis of work, in which the work that produced a product and the conditions of production are important. For the author, the socio-political, economic, cultural and religious situation of the "practice" of Jesus and the writing of Mark are of central importance. He highlights the fact that Mark is the narration of the practice of Jesus rather than a discourse. A fundamental point is that the Gospel is a subversive narrative of the subversive practice of Jesus.

He studies various texts (1:11-15; the Passion predictions, and 16:1-9) and aspects of the gospel: the subversive practice, the topology-strategy [i.e., "the study of the qualitative properties and relative positions of geometric beings" (85)], who is Jesus, and the Passion.

An assessment of this part of the book is difficult. One difficulty rises from the choice that the historical origin of Mark was in Rome about 71 C.E. Such a dated and oft-repeated hypothesis is questionable (see KUMMEL, *Introduction* 97-8). Another difficulty concerns the methods used. We judge that the methods do throw new light or highlight important aspects of Mark's gospel. However, the method is the exclusive norm for the interpretation of the text. The

faith origin of the text is omitted as well as other aspects. A further problem is the continuous "war" waged against an idealist and ideological reading of Mark. The Gospels have and can be interpreted in a "spiritual" sense and the socio-economic and political status of the interpreter or community has and does vitiate interpretation. Also the socio-economic and political factors of Jesus' life and the early community have not been given the importance they deserve in so much interpretative writings. Yet, we judge the author and his school exaggerate the "idealist" tendency in contemporary exegesis and tend to be ideological themselves.

We also question in underlining presupposition expressed in terms of the ideologization which at an early date rapidly and radically transformed the Christian practice into a Christian religion and then transformed the Christian religion into Christianity.

I have a fundamental question. This concerns the author's understanding of the resurrection which is described in terms of "the triple practice of faith, hope and love" and finds expression in economic and political practice and not clearly in terms of a personal event in Jesus' life. The consequence is that one reads Mark to discover the practice of Jesus in his historical life, detached and purified of the faith understanding of Jesus, which comes to expression for instance in 1:1. We shall not enter into a discussion of the interpretation of individual texts or themes where we find a combination of insight and interpretations which are difficult to justify from the text.

In conclusion, for readers who have a good biblical background this book is valuable, provocative and insightful and able to enrich our understanding of Mark. The book provides a partial methodology which can be integrated into, correct and enrich more traditional approaches. The book is a constant reminder that Jesus lived in a real world. However, we have definite reservations about important aspects of the book.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**The True Church and the Poor.** P. Jon SOBRINO, London SCM Press Ltd., 1985, Pp. 374. £ 9.95.

Jon Sobrino, the author of *Christology at the Crossroads*, undertakes the task

of presenting a renewed ecclesiology in the light of the Christian understanding of faith in God, the building up of the Kingdom of God, the practice of justice, the option for the poor and the holiness of the new being—the very substance of Christianity. He treats of the problems of unity and division within the Church, the meaning of evangelisation as the mission of the Church, the new and significant phenomenon of persecution and the definition of the true Church as the Church of the poor. The book is not a systematic reflection on all the Church is or ought to be. It is not a full-blooded ecclesiology. It is a theological reflection on the foundations of the Church, on which a new ecclesiology can be built. The contextual horizon of the book is the Church in Latin America and the struggles, sufferings and hopes of the peoples of LA. On the objective side, the method followed by Sobrino takes as the starting-point of a theological reflection the present reality of the Church, in so far as it is Christian and a manifestation of God, not a doctrine about the Church. On the subjective side, faith is not just a response to the revelation of God made in the past. Sobrino discusses the ecclesial faith as it is practised today, the faith in a God who manifests himself here and now. It is important to know in what manner God manifests himself and what form the faith response of the Church is taking. Regarding this, Sobrino thinks that in LA God's manifestation is "his scandalous and partisan love for the poor and his intention that these poor should receive life and thus inaugurate his Kingdom" (p. 2). This calls for a particular way of being conformed to the Kingdom: by being concerned for the justice of the Kingdom and making the poor a basis of such a concern. Sobrino believes that this is "the great sign of the times" (p. 2) and that reflection on the Church must begin with this and consolidate it. He refutes the objection that such an approach implies minimising doctrine and doing without established principles. Speaking a priori, we believe in the continual working of the Spirit of God in the Church and we have to continually discern God's manifestation in our times. To be frightened of the continual recreation of the Spirit would mean to be frightened of God and to deny the trinitarian faith. Without taking its history into theological reflection, our understanding of the Church would be partial,

idealistic and triumphalistic. It would not be theological.

Speaking a posteriori, we discover that fidelity to the signs of the times has led the Church to a mission that is directed to the poor and has produced, in a situation of persecution, hope against hope and a new faith in the Father of Jesus Christ as the unshakable rock for believers. This newness has its source in the Spirit of Jesus.

Sobrinho points out that theology in a concrete situation has to be "responsible", i.e. has to respond to the reality of the poor impinging on us; it has to be practical and not busy with pure thought, not even pure truth, but concerned with building up of the Kingdom and the Church at the service of the Kingdom; it has to be evangelical, done with joy because of the Good News to the poor that there is salvation for them; and it has to be grateful for the knowledge that something has been gifted to us, i.e. "the mystery of God present in Jesus and in a Church that is poor and of the poor" (p. 5).

Sobrinho explores these basic considerations systematically. In chapter one, he discusses in a balanced and nuanced way the two approaches to theology in Europe and LA. They are not contradictory: rather they carry specific emphases. European theology lacks self-criticism and is imprisoned in the anachronism of considering itself the centre for the world, without realising the dialectical tension between the periphery and the centre. The interlocutor of European theology is still the rationalist, the atheist, the modern man come of age. Its main task has been the restoration of the meaning of faith. In LA, the fundamental task of theology is the restoration of meaning to reality in a wretched state. Its struggle is not with the atheist but with the inhuman. In LA, theology is concerned with the transformation of a sinful reality, and it focuses its reflection on the liberating aspect of faith, the intimate connection between theory and practice and the epistemological break in the scandal of the cross. Sobrinho does not claim that no theology in Europe is concerned with these things nor does he hold that all theologies in LA have this concern as their way of doing theology. Theology in Europe and theology in LA have been struggling to overcome dualism each in its own way. The great concern of LA

theology has been in general to overcome the dualism between the believer and history, theory and practice.

In the chapter on the promotion of justice, Sobrinho argues that the practice of justice is necessary if faith is to be in harmony with its content, the mystery of God, and with the reality of the human situation. Justice is also the historical form of love as a response to the Gospel message in its entirety. The way of faith and the way of justice are not only inseparable but are the historical means that leads to unity in the true faith. Sobrinho points to the intrinsic connection between the service of faith and the promotion of justice as follows: "Making other people children of God is the Christian way of making oneself a child of God. Building the Kingdom of God is the Christian way of entering the Kingdom. To promote faith and justice is to advance oneself as a Christian" (p. 82).

The resurrection launches the Church into history to become a sacrament not only of the risen Christ but more palpably of the crucified one. This means that the Church conforms to the crucified and risen Christ in the concrete way of knowing, doing, hoping. Today "the Church of the poor" expresses this conformity better than any other formula. Without this consciousness, believers for example will be willing to celebrate the glory of the risen Christ but ignore the poor earthly Christ who hungers and who is naked.

A "Church for the poor" represents basically an ethical approach, and not yet an ecclesiological approach. Sobrinho thinks that a "Church of the poor" poses the ecclesial question. The approach of "the Church of the poor" requires that we move beyond a purely ethical concern and beyond a merely universalist idea to the awareness of the people of God.

The spirit of Jesus pours itself into the poor and recreates the whole world. The poor are not a part but the basis and centre of the whole Church. They are the authentic theological source. From the point of the Church of the poor, the understanding of the Church changes. Through the Church of the poor, we understand the Good News to the Poor. In such a Church, we learn and live an authentic liberation and the spirituality of the *kenosis*. It is here that the marks of the Church are truly manifested. Sobrinho shows this without romanticizing the poor. He argues for a new focus and

starting-point.

Sobrinho examines also the experience of God in the Church of the poor. For believers the Church of the poor is the privileged locus of encounter with God. Yet the poor are not considered an *exclusive* locus of the experience of God, but, in the historical situation of the human race, they are the *privileged* locus for the "greater" reality that God is. Whatever be the different exegetical interpretations given at Matthew 25, Sobrinho considers it an important passage for the understanding of the poor as the privileged locus of encounter with God.

Sobrinho clarifies the meaning of the Church of the poor by a reference to the meaning of "witness": while we witness to something, we also witness *against*—against sin, its power in ourselves and in society. Sobrinho discusses the theological significance of the persecution of the Church as a locus of revelation of the crucified Christ. He examines unity and conflict and discusses the mission of evangelisation from the standpoint of the Church of the poor in which we discover the evangelising potential of the simple, poor believers. Religious life is also rethought in the framework of the Church of the poor. The vows must express a dedication to other persons and thus help build the Kingdom of God.

Sobrinho's consistent and bold theology of the Church of the poor as a point of departure for a new understanding of faith and the mission of the Church is well argued and supported by the practice and faith expressions of the Latin American Church. The struggle of the Church to pass from being a Church *for* the poor to a Church *of* the poor is difficult, for there are too many people that are afraid of this exodus. If the Church takes the poor seriously, and directs its mission to them, they in turn evangelise the Church. Becoming a Church of the poor means this. The odds against achieving it are heavy.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

**Option for the Poor** By DONAL DORR. Dublin, Gill and Macmillan and Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1983. pp. viii-328. N. p.

The "Option for the Poor" is not just a catchphrase of liberation theology or a cliché of social activists. It stands for the recognition of the reality of the socio-economically marginalised

in our world and the obligation it creates for Christians and for all human beings. The social teaching of the Church in the different instructions of the magisterium at various levels has adopted this phrase. Some reactionary circles fight shy of such language and are surprised by the use of the phrase in recent magisterial teaching and probably irked by its supposed association with Marxism. In fact, such an option is found in the Bible.

The author is not concerned with an option for the poor as "an act of private asceticism or even of face-to-face compassion for a poor person" (3) but with the response at the level of human community as a whole to the unjust ordering of society. The option for the poor is discussed in the book at this level of a response to structural injustice. Such a response involves a series of choices by individuals, communities and corporate entities by which they disentangle themselves from structures and persons at the 'top' of society responsible for the injustice and enter into solidarity with the victims of such structures. Solidarity means also working and living within structures that promote justice, the welfare of the marginalised and their liberation.

Donald Dorr examines the option for the poor as a concern in the many magisterial documents published in the last hundred years. The phrase as such does not occur in early documents. But the concern is there. (The word "Vatican" in the subtitle is misleading as the documents of Medellín and Puebla are included in the study.) The Author goes through the documents starting from *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII in 1891 to *Laborem Exercens* of John Paul II in 1981, highlighting the option for the poor in significant passages, showing the development of thought through the years, and explaining the more clear articulation of the teaching of the Church on this point in recent times. The author does not enter into the historical background of the writing of these documents. I find the book a modest survey of the documents from the point of view of the option for the poor, without pretension to exhaustive scholarship.

The author also makes a point about the phrases "social doctrine" and "social teachings" of the Church. The "social doctrine" of the Church must not be understood as an eternal timeless



doctrine without relation to historical context. It must be understood in relation to the different needs of the human community. The social teaching is contextual, and it is open to growth.

In the earlier phase of the magisterial teaching on social questions, justice and concern for the poor were expressed as a call to improve the lot of the poor within the existing frame and form of government and society. The social teaching of Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV moved within these parameters. Out of a fear of socialism and revolution and a desire for stability in society, Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* softened the Patristic idea that the goods of the earth are meant for all and safeguarded the right to private property. He envisaged a socio-economic reform without changes in the existing political structures. Benedict XV taught that a diversity of classes was part of the natural order willed by God and warned the poor against any presumption to change this. Anyone can by honest labour improve his lot—a view that gave legitimacy to the “free enterprise” of the capitalist system.

In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI, while rejecting the socialist option, went beyond Leo in that he showed the inadequacies and injustices built in the whole socio-economic order of society. One can already see here an openness to what we now call “structural analysis”. Pius XI proposes a vocational ordering of society paying attention to providing employment to as many as possible. He also clearly established the principle of subsidiarity in this ordering of society.

Pope John XXIII in his *Mater et Magistra*, while speaking of the socialisation of different groups especially the world of workers, advocates workers' shares in corporate companies and suggests state intervention to ensure proper social relations, especially to enforce the social responsibilities that go with private property.

Speaking of peace, *Gaudium et Spes* shows its intrinsic link to justice as it embraces the whole economic order. The same document affirms clearly in no. 69 that the earthly goods are destined for all and that everyone has the clear right to provide for his or her basic needs and, if need be, to take for this from the riches of others. The duty of individuals and governments to provide the basic needs is stressed in a document with a

clear option for the poor.

A new perspective emerges in Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*. He shows a distinct knowledge of the global division of rich and poor countries, the effects of colonialism and the present neo-colonial trends. One important development in Pope Paul's teaching is that development and justice are something people have to do for themselves. The subjects of development must be empowered especially by literacy. We must stress the need for a conscientising and liberative literacy—not one that helps people to remain in the status quo of an unjust society. The bold teaching of Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* and *Octogesima Adveniens* is confined to a language of development through consensus. He is wary of confrontation and conflicts. The language of liberation belongs to Medellin, Puebla, and the latest two instructions of C D F on Liberation Theology and Freedom and Liberation.

The Synod of Bishops of 1971 brought into focus the structural injustice already mentioned in Medellin (1969). The struggle for justice is a constitutive dimension of the proclamation of the Gospel. This is the only document that brings out the need to witness to justice within the Church if one must dare to speak out on justice. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* reinforces the intimate connection between proclamation and liberation. The latter is put in a broader perspective that includes liberation from every form of oppression.

In his encyclicals and apostolic letters John Paul II promotes an integral humanism. The option against sin includes an option against injustice. In *Loborem Exercens*, he gives much importance to the solidarity among the poor and stresses a struggle for justice rather than struggle against others.

In his examination of the documents of the magisterium Dorr has teased out the thread of a deep concern for the poor although the articulation of this concern as an “option for the poor” is of late origin. The documents of the magisterium and various speeches of the present Pope in Rome and outside do often speak of the option for the poor and this is consonant with an organic tradition. Donal Dorr's study is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the social teaching of the Church, and it will serve everyone committed to the service of faith and promotion of justice.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

# Vidyajyoti

## JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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Editorial

A Plea for an Open Dialogue

If there is one presupposition to the various essays of this issue, it is the necessity of an open dialogue in the world and in the Church at all levels. Fr S. AROKIASAMY stresses the need for technology today to be in constant dialogue with the human reality of the world and therefore with the human sciences. Unless the technological machinery is attentive to the authentic needs of the real men and women around us, and specially of the poor and oppressed, it creates the Frankenstein monster that already looms large on the horizon of our modern world and is every day more difficult to control. Are the clouds of Bhopal and Chernobyl angels of this new Prince of the world?

Fr J. KOTTUKAPALLY's article completes his contribution in the May issue and is both a plea for an authentic listening by the Church of the real Marxist tradition and itself an example of the responsible, open and fraternal dialogue we need so much within the Church. Nobody can construe his honest critique of the way the CDF document on Liberation Theology treats Marxism as a negative criticism. It is rather a help offered to all of us to read the document intelligently. It is also a response from our local Church to that call for contributions from theologians and those involved in evangelization found in the Roman document itself (XI: 12-13).

It is surely a sign of growth and a reason for hope that there is today a dialogue between the local Churches, and specially between those in the so-called Third and First worlds, and between them and the Roman ministry. Much of the credit for strengthening this dialogue in the English-speaking world goes to the bold enterprise of ORBIS BOOKS which offers its services to the voices of the Third World and whose publications we so often review in our pages. We are

happy to reprint in this issue an informative article of David Bosch as an expression of our gratitude to Orbis and to the Maryknoll Society for the work done in this line in the last fifteen years.

Dialogue is also the policy of our Journal. We print today two rejoinders to an earlier article. Fr H. PASCUAL OIZ thinks that the dialogue of religions must be based on the awareness of their non-comparability and an honest acceptance of each one's insights and values. Sr Sara GRANT points to the contribution which our Church is called to make to the universal Church in the area of evolving a meaningful theology of religions. We cannot shirk our own personal and collective responsibility in this matter.

It is because we see so clearly the need of an open and honest dialogue in the Church that we are baffled by the recent prohibition reportedly made by the Roman administration to the Episcopal Conferences to publish their official responses to the theme of the Synod of Bishops. These contributions from the local churches, made in the context of their lives and struggles, are enriching and concrete in focus. On what theological principles, we may respectfully ask, are the local communities denied these contextualised faith reflections? When they are taken in secrecy to the Synod with a view to a universal articulation, the local churches are left only with a document coming from Rome, necessarily offering general principles, which they must learn again to apply to their situation. A strange ecclesial process!

Rules and regulations in the Church have to serve the growth of faith. Any law that prevents this building up of faith through an open and honest dialogue seems neither theologically justified nor educative towards an adult Church. If the presumption of the rules made is that the local churches and their pastors—not unblessed by the gifts of the Spirit—are primarily vulnerable to confusion and error, it is no honour to the Christian faith.

We have become used to older but equally questionable measures like the prohibition of making public the names of the elected members of the Synod of Bishops before Rome has "approved" of them, not to speak of the demand that all translations of the liturgical texts be submitted to the central authority before their use. Is the Church's commitment to dialogue, participation and co-responsibility only a matter of statements and propositions? The mysticism of truth is that 'the Word became flesh'. Does the truth of deeds mean anything to us?

# Technology and the Future

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

**M**ODERN technology contributes to the welfare of humanity in many ways. Its benefits in the area of medicine, industry, agriculture, energy, communication are great, and could be soon the all-embracing infrastructure of our daily lives, our hearths and homes. Yet these benefits have also their seamy side. Our world is divided into the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, the marginalized and the privileged. This division and alienation affects persons, families and society. In such a world, technological choices ought to be guided by a primacy given to the creation of a just, participatory and sustainable society.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, I share some reflections on the basic human issues raised by modern technology, negative and positive. The basic thrust of science and technology is to make known what is technically possible. But to actually do everything that is scientifically and technically possible, regardless of responsible human choices, contradicts the purpose of technology.<sup>2</sup> A technological possibility is not automatically a moral approval. Moral oughtness comes from the *humanum* of people and, for a believer, in a radically meaningful way from God's purposes for humankind. We have to make our choices according to the criteria of the *humanum* that ought to be respected, protected, enriched and served.

When we reflect on technology, we must be aware of its political-economic context. There are politics of power behind modern science and technology. Accountability and a social audit regarding technology are possible only if there are viable democratic structures of participation in political power and government. Technology therefore depends on the power relations both at national and international levels.

In this connection we recall some significant statistics. It is said that 90% of all the technologists and scientists that have ever lived are alive today. Of these again 90% live and work in industrialised

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1. Cf. Paul ABRECHT, *Faith, Science and the Future*, Geneva, W.C.C. 1979.

2. B. HARING, *Free and Faithful in Christ*, Vol. 1, Slough, St Paul Publ 1981, p. 191.

countries. More than 90% of their work is devoted to research for the rich countries leading to protected technological processes.<sup>3</sup> There is another disturbing fact: more than 50% of scientists and technologists are engaged in the war industry.<sup>4</sup>

Governments and corporations often base themselves on what is technologically possible and what is profitable for their vested interests, and not on what serves justice, the quality of life and the real needs of the people. But even in a technologically-oriented society, commitment to justice and freedom, to the dignity and life of the poor, must become normative in the use of technology at the service of all. This norm can be operative only in a perspective of universal human solidarity. It dictates policies regarding technological possibilities and choices: feeding the hungry, bringing basic health to the poor and making life liveable for all the peoples of the earth.<sup>5</sup>

In a critique of modern technology we must recognise that it is an establishment with its own structures of organisation and decision-making which are themselves politically operated and ideologically manipulated. Today science is over-organised and has become a vested interest. Over-organised science has a totalising effect on human consciousness, emphasizing the line of rationality and objectivity, to the detriment of the human and inter-subjectivity. Such science is not open to the democratic structure of (non-scientist) people's participation in decision-making. Over-organised science is authoritarian and becomes anti-people.

Scientism's ideological understanding of technology, which makes science the measure and arbiter of all truth and the source of solutions to all our problems, must be rejected. Technology must be viewed in relation to the quality and enhancement of human life. Technology should be made the servant of human well-being and an instrument of life. Without this critical vision, it will become a threat to life.

### *Justice and Participation in Technological Choices*

The Christian community should continually remind people of the principles of the stewardship of the good gifts of creation, the

3. R.L. SHINN (ed.), *Faith and Science in an Unjust World*, Vol. I. *Plenary Presentations*, Geneva, W.C.C. 1980, p. 26.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

5. Cf. R. GALLAGHER, "The Tasks of Morality Influenced by Technology" in *Studia Moralia* 23 (1985) pp. 29-56, esp. 49-55.

sacredness of human life, and the right of every human person and people to a fair share of these gifts. The basis of these principles is our common humanity, created in the image and likeness of the triune God who is communion of persons and community of relationships, and our fraternal solidarity. In the concrete history of the world in which we find ourselves and of a poor country like ours, decisions must reflect a preferential commitment to the poor, marginalised and hungry. The Christian community can bring this preference to bear on policies regarding technology. In this context of our siding with the poor, we must ensure that the voices of the voiceless who are affected by technological policies be heard. This would guarantee their participation in technological decision-making.<sup>6</sup> Of course, this does not mean that the Church has an anti-technology attitude.

Technological decision-making tends to be restricted to technocrats, the elite, and a few politicians. The decisions made by this minority affect the welfare of millions of people in the country. Such decisions are not a matter of pure technology. They are political. In a democracy that wants to be people-centred and people-oriented, technology requires a participatory mode of decision-making. Policy-making bodies should include non-experts, environmentalists, people of religion and culture, above all those who can articulate the hopes, aspirations and needs of the concerned communities, especially the poor, marginalised and the hungry. Today we have to struggle for a technology that reflects society's commitment to justice and to the freedom and dignity of the poor. Technology *for* the people must, through their participation, become a technology *of* the people. Considered in itself, modern technology is one-sided. The preferential option for justice to and the freedom and dignity of the poor—which might also appear one-sided—alone can actually correct the selfish one-sidedness of all our choices and policies, and bring and maintain sanity and human wholeness in our use of technology. But technological choices from the point of the poor may sometimes require active forms of protest against the forces that would deny such preference.

People should participate in the decision-making connected with factories that use a very high technology. Such informed participation is an imperative when very advanced technology factories are

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6. P. ABRECHT (ed.), *Faith and Science in an Unjust World*, Vol. 2, *Reports and Recommendations*, Geneva, W.C.C. 1980, p. 190.

built which imply high risks to life and environment. Today one speaks of the "acid rain" of sulphur dioxide, a waste product of power stations that destroys forests. The tragic event in Bhopal on 3rd December 1984 is a serious warning to all of us. A multi-national corporation (Union Carbide), specialising in pesticides and with a "most modern" technology involving a highly lethal gas (methylisocyanate), built a factory for the manufacture of pesticide within the city area of Bhopal. Who made the decision? A few government officials and politicians, and the technocrats and managerial personnel of the corporation. Probably an informed participation of the people of Bhopal would have led to a strong protest against the location of the factory within the city limits. A small elite decided on something that would be fatal to thousands. This is what happened in Bhopal.

### *Sustainability*

We must, moreover, see technology, at the service, not only of a just and participatory society, but also of a sustainable one. Justice (social justice at the national and international levels), participation by the people in decision-making (more democracy), and the sustainability of the earth with all its resources for humankind today and tomorrow (or a sense of stewardship and respect for the earth) are interconnected criteria to judge technology's authentic service to humankind. In their affluence, advanced countries concentrate on the criterion of sustainability of the earth and support it with the life-boat theory, to the neglect and detriment of justice for poor countries and the participation of people in technological choices. In authoritarian regimes, participation in technological choices is practically nil. Overemphasis on a sustainable society can express the selfishness of affluent countries. It means that the present affluent state of the West must not be upset. But the historical imperative regarding technology for the future is that it should be so mobilised as to meet the basic needs of people, minimise human suffering and create an environment that can sustain a decent quality of life.<sup>7</sup>

We must reckon with the tremendous social costs of modern technology and forestall them.<sup>8</sup> We need to change the unjust structures in society and create social mechanisms that will make science

7. Philip POTTER, "Science and Technology: Why are the Churches Concerned?", in *The Ecumenical Review*, 31 (1979) pp. 347 ff.

8. Cf. Enda McDONAGH, *Doing the Truth*, Dublin, Gill & Macmillan 1979, pp. 11-137.

and technology serve social justice at all levels. This would call for "a radical transformation of civilization, new technologies, new uses for technology, and new global economic and political systems."<sup>9</sup> We must become aware today that "the crucial problems of choice, in technology and in socially significant scientific research too, depend on values held by the community, that cannot and will not be reduced down to scientific facts."<sup>10</sup> In such choices we must also realise that science and technology "cannot be self-sufficient in determining priorities and in distributing risks fairly."<sup>11</sup> The process needed is political, which implies a democratic participation of the people in such choices, and a moral commitment which stands by the humanness of our choices.

### *Technology and Ecology*<sup>12</sup>

On this topic, one can start with the Buddhist insight of the relatedness of all beings. In a sense relatedness defines a being. As applied to technology, this means that we retain a habitual positive regard and respect for everything and we learn to act, with understanding for each other and for our environment. Respect for our relatedness to the other beings of the cosmos (animals, plants, all other things of the earth) in our technological activity will preserve an environment that helps all. It is in this connection that Matsugi makes an illuminating observation on the so-called "man-centred" approach to nature, to its resources and to other living beings.<sup>13</sup> An exclusively man-centred science and technology become detrimental to man on account of the lack of respect for the environment and nature and the thoughtless depletion of the resources of the earth and its consequent pollution. The environment for human life is "nature", but modern technology is gradually changing it into "techno-nature".<sup>14</sup> Such an approach is the result of and in turn strengthens the purely instrumentalist view of nature without any respect for relatedness. In such a man-centred approach to science, the triumphalist principle of feasibility leaves behind it a crop of mounting expectations of consumerism and a lifestyle based on the

9. Quoted in SHINN (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 25.

10. J.R. RAVETZ, "Science and Technology as Promise and Threat" in *The Ecumenical Review*, 31 (1979) p. 370.

11. *Ibid.*

12. See Nobushiko MATSUGI, "A Contemporary Buddhist's Critical Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Culture" in SHINN (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 148-153.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-153.

14. J. MIGUEZ BONINO, *Towards a Christian Political Ethics*, London, SCM 1983, p. 13.



profit motive, without regard for a caring and sharing community. This undermines the human quality of family life and of society at large. The perspective of man as centre of the universe has fostered an aggressively greedy and possessive domination of nature and this has served to promote a self-indulgent ideology. The observation of C.S. Lewis is perceptive: Man's power over nature is indeed some men's power over other men. In human hands nature becomes an instrument for domination.<sup>15</sup> The insightful critique coming from the Buddhist world-view is to be appreciated. We need to recover the sense of stewardship for creation as the Christian response to the problems of ecology. With the energy-intensive technologies of rapid industrialization the harmonious ecological balance between the atmosphere of our planet and the different living groups on the earth has been upset. Today we need to raise the consciousness of people to this fact which affects the present and future of the earth.

The ecological question is raised on two levels: (a) the limitations of the resources of the earth, and (b) the destruction of the ecosystem supportive of the quality of life. The depletion of scarce resources by rapid technological process causes serious concern. Advanced countries are so quickly exhausting the non-renewable energy sources and other raw materials (it is estimated that 80% of the use of non-renewable resources is by the West) that many developing countries cannot even now get a fair share, while the future generations will be deprived of them. This also leads to a disruption of the ecosystem and a pollution of the environment, especially the air and sea. The technological approach to progress does not take into account the fact that the waste products from the rapid progress of advanced technology go on polluting the earth,

Modern technology has a mechanical world-view that is anti-ecological. Its factory-view of nature is anti-nature. It is therefore also anti-human, since it tends to include the things that matter for man very much in its mechanical view. Specially in bio-technology and nuclear weapon technology, scientists and technocrats make blueprints in which human realities are mere figures in their calculations, to the detriment of human life, relations, culture, values, and all that is finely human. In such a mechanical world-view the universe ceases to be a universe of the human community, or, as some call it, a "humiverse". The Buddhist insight of the relatedness of everything and the Christian concept of stewardship for our planet are signifi-

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15. J.F. DEBEK, *Human Life*, New York, Sheed & Ward 1972, p. 118.

cant for an ecological ethic and responsibility.

Our commitment to a just, participatory and sustainable society demands the people's participation in technological choices. An ecological ethic requires such a participation. What concerns our human environment cannot be left to a few individuals. This is all the more imperative with regard to nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Modern technology has its sunny and its shady sides. We are not anti-technology. Technology should be appropriate to people and to the whole universe by being imbued with ecological responsibility. But even people-centred technology which calls for informed participation in technological decisions needs a further criterion from social justice, that is, that priority be effectively given to the poor of the earth and their basic needs.

### *Transfer of Technology*

Developing countries require a technology appropriate to the needs of their societies. But advanced technologies are owned by transnational corporations (TNCs) which are primarily guided by the goal of profit. In the transfer of technology to developing countries through TNCs, developed countries replace their former colonial political control with economic control, through technology and science. There is the continual temptation to transfer high technology without attention to the needs, values, culture and local resources of small countries. With their inflated power the TNCs manipulate countries and their politics bypassing the people's needs and their participation. This perpetuates a dominance-subservience relationship, and smothers the freedom of developing countries to develop in their own way, in harmony with their cultural values and social set-up.

When a Third World country like India imports and concentrates on a highly capital-intensive technology, this leads to a biased organization of the industrial and urban sector. The hope that its benefits will "percolate" to the poor has failed. It has conferred benefits only on the privileged minority. It has bypassed the country's vast human work resources. India needs technologies that can absorb its vast human work force.<sup>16</sup>

We must also pay attention to the side-effects of a technology that produces and promotes consumerism. We cannot support a

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16. ABRECHT, *Faith, Science and the Future*, pp. 194-5.

technology that benefits a small minority but creates false needs and compulsions in the poor struggling to meet their essential and basic needs. The criterion we must use in fixing priorities for our technological choices is to raise the standard of living and the quality of life of the poor.

In such choices we have to fight against the pressure of the TNCs and the privileged minority who thirst for an imitative technology leading to the "throw-away" philosophy of the consumerist society. Consumerism, fostered by imitative technology, becomes a form of consciousness that hardens our perception of the basic needs. It leads to the demand for mass-produced goods as "wants". These the poor majority neither really need nor can they afford them. They will tragically translate "thirst into the need for a Coke."<sup>17</sup> Such a perversion Illich calls reification (in German, *Verdinglichung*), for it is a manipulation of primary human needs by vast bureaucratic organizations. In this way the needs of the vast majority can never be satisfied. Consumerism thus becomes underdevelopment.

### *Appropriate Technology*

Appropriate technology should not in any way mean that developing countries remain at a minimal level of development and dependence. In our thinking appropriate technology means a technology that is conducive to meet the needs of a country in harmony with its culture and environment. It is meant to meet the basic needs of people for food, shelter, clothes . . . , and to preserve a healthy natural environment. Technology for the people reckons with what technology does to the people.

Appropriate technology for a country like India will consider the following points: (a) to help the country to attain its desired socio-economic objectives; (b) to take account of the country's potentialities; (c) involve low social cost; and (d) promote self-reliance.

Technology should keep a country striving for the uplift and well-being of the poor, both rural and urban. Priorities and choices of technology in industry, agronomy, health, etc., should be fixed by the principles of social justice, self-reliance and people's participation. A country working for self-reliance, exploiting its own natural

17. Cf. Ivan ILLICH, *Celebration of Awareness*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1977, p. 136.

18. ABBECHT, *Faith, Science and the Future*, p. 199.

resources and mobilising and rationalising its own vast human work power, does not thereby reject inter-dependence. Self-reliance does not mean isolation. With the primacy given to social justice, self-reliance and people's participation, a country can accept the transfer of a technology that is appropriate to these goals.

The concept of appropriate technology must be operative in every country. Working for higher GNP fails to remove poverty in the perspective of social justice. We ask today: What is being produced and for whom? Why has growth in the GNP failed to benefit the poor? Social justice and self-reliance are preconditions of true growth. In this context we understand that the appropriateness in technology concretises in some way the norm of social justice, people's participation and inter-dependence. It also protects a country from the manipulation not only by technocrats and the elitist minority at the helm of affairs but also by the TNCs.

An appropriate technology in a country like India means also that we evolve forms of technology that are "capital-saving", "energy-saving" and "labour-using".<sup>19</sup> An appropriate technology is always guided in its choices and direction by the contribution it can make to the well-being of the people who are socially and economically deprived. Appropriateness surely implies an improvement of skills and techniques, but we must take care that it is need-based and non-exploitative and that it makes an optimum use of available resources.<sup>20</sup>

Appropriateness in technology calls for a different type of development and progress from the one we have. We are in search of a new model that challenges social thinkers, scientists, planners and people to responsibility. We must recognise that an appropriate technology needs supportive value orientations, styles of life and such structures as small-scale production, decentralisation, a socially oriented production, etc. I would rather say that an appropriate technology is both an expression of the value of and an attitudinal support to simplicity and limitation of wants, as distinct from needs. There is a need to move appropriate technology from its peripheral position to a central place and work towards harmonizing the "modern" and the "appropriate" aspects in our technological choices.<sup>21</sup> While combining in a balanced manner "modern" and "appropriate", we must pay attention to bureaucracy and technocracy as the main pro-

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19. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

blems. These two must be tempered by the participation of people in debate, decision-making and accountability structures. According to Peter Berger, bureaucracy and technology are the main carriers of "modernization" in the modern state.<sup>22</sup>

### *Bio-Technology*<sup>23</sup>

We accept that the clear objective of all bio-technology is the service of life, health and the care of sick people. Since technology by itself stands for pragmatic efficacy, possibilities and factuality, and its considerations and calculations by themselves do not go beyond them, it is the human community in its stewardship that must protect the humanity of people and make this technology serve and enhance human life and renounce methods that offend against the dignity of human life and persons. We do not consider scientists to be wicked men. We would rather be on guard against wicked philosophers, wicked priests, and wicked politicians,<sup>24</sup> who are capable of the gravest mischief. Medical and bio-technology have developed many new possibilities for which we need moral clarifications and ethical wisdom in exercising responsibility for a just and humane world. The human community must dictate the policy in this important area according to the norms of human dignity and the quality of life. We need, in the words of Pope Paul VI more "experts in humanity" in this area.

### *Spirituality in a Technological Age*

When viewed from the standpoint of solidarity with the poor nations and commitment to their transformation, technology calls for a spirituality of renunciation of greed, an asceticism for the sake of justice, and a caring and sharing lifestyle. Such a spirituality is found in the *via crucis*, the Way of the Cross, in the light and the strength of which we take a stand against the triumphalism of a "value-free" technology which stands on the principle of the feasibility of all things.<sup>25</sup>

Such a spirituality must become a social spirituality of families. Families are the conducive milieu in which children, the future

22. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

23. Cf. SHINN (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 278.

24. Cf. DEDEK, *op. cit.*, p. 118, regarding C.S. Lewis' view on genetic options.

25. SHINN (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 204.

generations, learn and live out social virtues and attitudes. A caring and sharing life-style is a value spontaneously imbibed from parents who have made deliberate choices in this regard. Today simplicity of life is emerging as a social imperative for the affluent. To this culture and ethos families can make a basic and constructive contribution.

Simplicity means also decency of life. This demands that the poor cease to be poor so that they too can lead a life of decency. Modern technology cannot spare us from the asceticism and simplicity of life needed even for our physical and mental health. People in their sell-out to technology with its naive faith in the possibility of all things, without a corresponding responsibility for protecting and enriching human society, may await the new magical pill that will enable them to eat all the fattening food they want and yet remain slim, burn all the gasoline they want and yet not pollute the air, and live as intemperately as they desire and yet not contract cancer or suffer cardiac arrest. This is a simplistic faith, a sell-out to medical technology. These comments may be more pertinent in an affluent context, but the point for us is that we must pay attention to the side-effects in a culture bent on using high technology.

### *Epilogue*

Science and technology tell us what is feasible according to the laws of physics, chemistry and biology . . . They will go on expanding the realm of what is possible. The question that human beings have to ask regarding these possibilities is what ought to be done, what is useful and yet consonant with the dignity of human persons and worthy of human life.

Ivan Illich, the prophet of new education, makes a distinction between expectation and hope.<sup>26</sup> Science and technology, by which men go on expanding the realm of the possible, do at the same time increase our expectations. Expectations create "reliance on results which are planned and controlled by man."<sup>27</sup> Hope, on the other hand, relies on the goodness of human persons. We hope for something from another person as a gift. Hope increases when human persons discover new possibilities of being richly human. It never feels that these possibilities are exhausted.

26. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling of Society*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1971, p. 106.

27. *Ibid.*

With the rapid progress in technology, the human community may miss the nuanced distinction between expectation and hope. While we go on experimenting with technology because of the bewitching expectations of new possibilities, we may weaken in our efforts or perhaps stop experimenting with hope for the life of humankind. Specially we may fail to reduce the destructive possibilities of inhumanity and to increase the rich possibilities of promoting the values that build, protect and enhance the dignity and the quality of life.

In the great experiment with hope for the quality and dignity of human life, we can make technological progress a servant of this hope. The Second Vatican Council in its Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World articulates a normative direction for human progress (GS 35): "A man is more precious for what he is than for what he has." To be more human, we need "to obtain greater justice, wider brotherhood and a more humane ordering of social relationships" than what technology makes possible for us to have. Science and technology provide us with things so that our "having" is expanded. "Having more" does not automatically correlate with "being more".

Our hope, not expectations, regarding technology is a technology without materialism. We stand for progress and development without depersonalization. We are faced with value options for the future of humankind and its quality of life. We recognise science and technology as gifts, while we accept responsibilities that we have to exercise before God and before all creatures as demands of love. No one can exempt us from our responsibility for our world and its future. We have to choose our future.

# Marxism in Recent Vatican Doctrine, II.

## The 1984 Instruction on the "Theology of Liberation": A Doctrinal U-Turn

J. KOTTUKAPALLY, S.J.

### Introductory Note

*In an earlier article<sup>1</sup> we saw the evolution of the magisterial doctrine in relation to Marxism from John XXIII to John Paul II's 1981 encyclical on Labour. In this article we shall examine the INSTRUCTION ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE "THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION," issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF), and dated 6 August 1984.*

*The reader might very rightly ask why the 1984 Instruction, and not the recent INSTRUCTION ON CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND LIBERATION.<sup>2</sup> The answer is that the latter, meant to complement the former and, specifically, to "highlight the main elements of the Christian doctrine of freedom and liberation" (2), in no way modifies the earlier doctrine on Marxism. "Far from being outmoded," the warnings of the 1984 Instruction "appear ever more timely and relevant" (2). As a matter of fact, the recent Instruction never mentions Marxism; but it has a number of oblique references to Marxism<sup>3</sup> faithfully echoing the doctrine of its predecessor.*

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1. VIDYAJYOTI, May 1986, pp. 250-264.

2. Dated 25 March, and published on 5 April 1986.

3. No. 5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 27, 68, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78 and 98. It must be observed that too much seems to be made of this Instruction's approval of "armed struggle" as the "last resort" (79). For one thing, this is absolutely traditional doctrine! Even more importantly, this approval should not be construed as any sort of softening of the CDF towards Marxism. I stress this because in certain circles such an impression does seem to exist. Such an interpretation is wrong on two counts. One, it erroneously identifies Marxism with armed struggle or violence. This identification is wrong because armed struggle, while it may be seen by Marxism as inevitable under the prevailing conditions, does not constitute its core. This core can rather more properly be identified as "revolution," which the Instruction vehemently repudiates as a dangerous "myth" (78). Secondly this approval of armed struggle as a last resort has no doubt in view also "militants" like the Nicaraguan "contras," whom not only President Reagan but also Cardinal Obando Bravo, a Vatican favourite, hail as "freedom fighters."



A second preliminary observation that is due is that the document we are dealing with is an *Instruction of a Vatican Congregation, not a papal document*. It was indeed "approved" by the Pope, "who ordered its publication," as stated in the Conclusion. That does not, however, make it a properly papal document or equip it with papal authority properly so called. Neither can it be considered accidental that the Pope made the CDF issue the *Instruction* (as the recent one, too) on its own (derived) authority, instead of owning it up as his very own.

## I

WITH the 1984 *Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith "On Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation',"* the Vatican doctrine in respect of Marxism takes a perfect U-turn. Between the warm and benevolent openness of Pope John and the blind and total hostility of the *Instruction* there is nothing that can be called common. Not that the *Instruction* presents a clear and consistent doctrine. It does not. However, the inconsistencies and confusion do not conceal the CDF's totally negative approach to Marxism. What one finds in the *Instruction* is not clear and objective thinking and analysis, not to speak of "a total openness to the reality to be described"—a hermeneutical principle laid down by the *Instruction* itself (VII:13)<sup>4</sup> but a resentful and angry outburst, lacking clarity and consistency.

The *Instruction* starts with a warning about the danger of using "different concepts without sufficient critical caution" (Introduction). "It is difficult," we are told, "and perhaps impossible, to purify these borrowed concepts of an ideological inspiration which is incompatible with Christian faith and the ethical requirements which flow from it" (*ibid*).

It apparently escapes the authors that the difference between "difficult" and "impossible" is not one of degree, such as could be bridged over by a "perhaps." It also escapes them that at least a few of the "dangerous" Marxist concepts in question *might* in actual fact, have accrued to Marxism from practically forgotten Christian and wider biblical tradition and that Marxism *might* be only summoning us back to our own origins.

The confusion pervading the entire discussion of Marxism in the

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4. Roman and Arabic figures refer to sections and subsections respectively.

Instruction is due, it seems to me, to the foredoomed attempt to find a viable balance between "difficult" and "impossible." The authors do not explicitly assert (because that should be blatant theological absurdity) that it *is* impossible for theology to incorporate anything at all from Marxism with due discernment; hence the grudging concession of "difficult." The implicit and operative presupposition, however, is that any meaningful dialogue and co-operation with Marxism *is* impossible.

The net result of such a stance is that vital questions like, for example, whether Christianity and Marxism have anything at all significantly common or complementary, whether they can at all relate to each other except through anathemas and denunciations, whether and on what theoretical basis any practical co-operation between Christians and Marxists is possible, and, if any such co-operation is possible, how one should go about it, whether theology can or even ought to assimilate certain elements from Marxism for an honest self-critique if not for self-enrichment—these and similar questions not only remain unanswered; they are also rendered unanswerable in terms of the logic of the Instruction.

"Liberation Theology" is repeatedly criticised, directly and indirectly, for its "insufficiently critical" use of "borrowed" Marxist concepts (VI:10; VII:4,6,10,13). It would seem, therefore, that a *sufficiently critical* use of such concepts should still be legitimate and viable. In fact, being, so to say, cornered by the journalists before whom he presented the Instruction on 3 September 1984 and who wanted to know why, unlike other non-Christian philosophical systems, Marxism was being judged as untouchable, Cardinal Ratzinger grudgingly conceded that "there are some valid and useful elements" in Marxism.<sup>5</sup> But he did not indicate which these "valid and useful elements" were, or *how* one could positively make use of them.

We are told that "the borrowing of a method of approach to reality should be preceded by a careful epistemological critique" (VII:4); that in the case of Marxism "a preliminary critique is all the more necessary, since the thought of Karl Marx is such a global vision of reality" (VII:6); that such preliminary critique must be carried out "from a theological perspective" (VII:10); that, since "the first condi-

5. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 10 September 1984, p. 5. The Cardinal once again admitted that there is "a nucleus of truth in Marxism" (cf. *The Examiner*, June 22, 1985, p. 566; also *The Tablet* 1 June 1985, p. 565).

tion for any analysis is a total openness to the reality to be described," "a critical consciousness has to accompany the use of any working hypotheses that are being adopted" (VII:13).

One would, therefore, naturally expect that the Instruction would positively and concretely demonstrate how such a due and proper preliminary critique of Marxism could be undertaken. But the Instruction does nothing of the sort.

Might it be, then, that we must await *another* document "which will detail in a positive fashion"<sup>6</sup> a method of entering into a critically creative dialogue with Marxism? Not at all. For, unlike all other systems and ideologies, ancient or modern,

the thought of Karl Marx is such a global vision of reality that all data received from observation and analysis are brought together in a philosophical and ideological structure, which predetermines the significance and importance to be attached to them (VII:6).

The Instruction does not, of course, bother to demonstrate how Marxism is a *more* "global vision of reality" than such classical philosophical systems as Platonism or Aristotelianism, so much of which has been acknowledgedly "baptized" and incorporated into theology, or such other religious systems as, for example, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, with all of which the Church has vowed to maintain a relation of friendly and creative dialogue. In what way is Marxism more complete and monolithic than all other systems?

As a matter of fact, the Instruction's vision of Marxism is incomparably more exalted than that of any Marxist in my acquaintance. According to the Instruction, Marxism is not only a perfect and perfectly coherent "global vision", an "all-embracing conception" (VIII: ) of reality; it is also such an "epistemologically unique complex" that "no separation of parts is possible" and if one foolhardily "tries to take only one part, say, the analysis, one ends up having to accept the entire ideology" (VII:6).

What are the *facts* relevant to the point at discussion? How complete or perfect is Marxism as an ideology? How much of a unity is it as a political movement? An elementary acquaintance with Marxism as a movement will show that it remains splintered on the global and national levels. And this politically splintered state is (even by the logic of the Instruction) the expression of an ideological splintering.

6. This clause, occurring in the Introduction of the 1984 Instruction, refers to the 1986 document.

Marx and Engels themselves did not succeed in preserving even for a decade the unity of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) which they had helped found in 1864. After they died, Eduard Bernstein, who was the official editor of Marx's works even while Engels lived, and Karl Kautsky, who, according to Lenin, knew "Marx and Engels by heart," turned out to be arch-"revisionists" and "renegades." West European Marxist and Socialist theories perhaps owe as much to these "renegades" and to other non-Leninists like Rosa Luxemburg and Antonio Gramsci as to Marx and Engels, not to speak of Lenin. As for the reigning orthodoxy of "Marxism-Leninism," the politico-ideological "unity" of the "Marxism-Leninism" of Stalin and Krushchev, of Mao and Deng, of Enver Hoxha and Fidel Castro, of Pol Pot and Heng Samrin requires no comment.

Karl Marx did not compose any "Marxist" or socialist treatise. His *magnum opus*, *Capital*, was meant not as a theory of socialism but only as a critique of contemporary capitalism. But even that work was left by him as a fragment. Secondly, Marx's specific contribution to the so-called "theory" of "scientific socialism" was *historical materialism*. It was Engels who tried to extend this theory to nature and clearly subordinated history to nature. One can only wonder how Marx would have judged Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*, according to which even the highest form of Communism is nothing but an extended moment in Nature's eternal recurrence<sup>7</sup>—when Marx himself had envisioned Communism not only as the final solution of the "riddle of history", but also

the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man, the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species.<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, Lenin is considered the undisputed master of Marxist revolutionary praxis—at least by those who swear by him. And, undoubtedly, Lenin's unique contribution to Marxist theory is the part on the State and Revolution. But his great work of that title is another tantalizing fragment. Lenin had to break off the composition of *The State and Revolution* just on the eve of the Great October Revolution, and could never return to it again.

7. See my *The Hope We Share*, Barrackpore, Dialogue Series, 1983, pp. 66-67.

8. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977, p. 97.

And if class struggle truly belongs to the very "ideological core" of Marxism (VIII:1 ff), it has also been the very treacherous rock on which were wrecked and wrecked apparently once for all, proletarian internationalism as well as the politico-ideological unity of Marxism. It was due to conflicting interpretations of the class struggle that the First and Second Internationals broke up. Lenin and almost all his peers (Bernstein and Kausky, Rosa Luxemburg and Plekhanov and Trotsky) were on each other's throats owing to conflicting interpretation of this key concept.

Granted that atheism is "at the core of Marxist theory" (VIII:9); granted that Marx, Engels, Lenin and other Marxist masters were uncompromisingly militant atheists. But how does it necessarily follow from this premise that all Marxist "criterion of interpretation depends on this atheistic conception" (VII:9) and nothing besides?

Purely in terms of logic, that atheism is "at" the core will as not make it *the* core of Marxist theory. There *could* be other factors, indeed even more important ones than atheism, constituting *the* core of the Marxist theory. Consider some well-known facts.

The very first joint work of Marx and Engels was *The Holy Family Or Critique of Critical Criticism Against Bruno Bauer and Company* (1845), and it was a barrage of scorn upon contemporary rationalism, which precisely had made all "criterion of interpretation depend on atheism". Marx and Engels stoutly resisted making atheism a condition for membership in the International Working Men's Association. For Lenin (and after him, for all Marxist orthodoxy) it was a basic principle that atheism should *not* be part of the Programme of the Proletarian Party or of the State.<sup>9</sup> This was not because of some atavistic love of God or religion, but precisely because, in the Marxist view, "God", Heaven, etc., are "illusions" or "projections" of the human being helplessly caught in "real distress" here below: because, in Lenin's words,

unity in this really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of the proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven.<sup>10</sup>

*The core of the Marxist theology, therefore, is not atheism, but the*

9. Cf. V.I. LENIN, *On Religion*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1978, pp. 7-11, where he explains "why we do not set forth our atheism in our Programme" (p 11). This principle is so fundamental that no Marxist or Communist Party (except, possibly, the Albanian one) includes atheism as an item on its official Programme.

10. V.I. LENIN, *On Religion*, p. 10.

"really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of paradise on earth."

In its total preoccupation with the theoretical "atheism-theism" opposition, the CDF apparently also forgets that for every one of the Old Testament prophets the arch-rival of the living God is not some "fool"'s atheism (cf Ps 14:1), but the *false* god, the *idol*; that Jesus has named this idol *Mammon* (Mt 6:24), and that Mammon is, in terms of its working, identical with what Marx has identified as the prime anti-humanist principle, exploitative and oppressive "private property". Equally forgotten by the CDF is that, in terms of the religion of the Bible, God is decisively known, loved, served and attained not through empty proclamations or through worship and cult, but through effective love and service of the neighbour.<sup>11</sup> that the early Christians (most of whom belonged to the scum of society, besides) were hunted down by the Roman emperors precisely as "atheists", because they refused to worship the "god" of the Empire.

Indeed, what kind of "theism" and "religion" did Marx really attack? Just one example should be sufficient to tell that tale. Here is a portion of "A Dissertation on the Poor Laws" by J. Townsend, a theologian of Britain's official Church, as quoted (and denounced) by Marx:

Legal constraint . . . is attended with too much trouble, violence and noise, . . . whereas hunger is not only a peaceable, silent, unremitted pressure, but as the most natural motive to industry and labour it calls forth the most powerful exertions. . . . It seems to be a law of Nature that the poor should be to a certain degree improvident, that there may be always some to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, and the most ignoble offices in the community. The stock of human happiness is thereby much increased, whilst the most delicate are not only relieved from drudgery . . . but are left at liberty without interruption to pursue those callings which are suited to their various dispositions . . . [The Poor Law] tends to destroy the harmony and beauty, the symmetry and order of that system which God and Nature have established in the world.<sup>12</sup>

But even if atheism were indeed the core of Marxism, that would not absolve *us* of our bounden obligation to honest self-critique in its light, painful and cruel as this might be. And, as a matter of fact, such a stalwart of Catholic thought as Jacques Maritain, from whom

11. Need it be clarified that the point is *not* that worship and cult are superfluous, but that they stand in a relation of subordination to fraternal love, which simply *is* the New Commandment, the distinctive sign of Jesus' disciples and the ultimate determinant of eternal life or damnation?

12. Karl MARX, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, Progress Publishers 1965, pp. 646-47.

the recent Popes have acknowledgedly learnt a thing or two, has not failed to stress the prophetic character of Marx's criticism of society and religion,<sup>13</sup> while such independent and knowledgeable students of Marxism as Arnold Toynbee and David McLellan are with Martin in characterising Marxism as a Christian "heresy."<sup>14</sup>

Whereas the Instruction, at least for form's sake, distinguishes between "authentic" liberation theology and errant "liberation theology," it has no qualms to damn Marxism as a wholly undifferentiated, unredeemed and unredeemable mass of evil. It attributes to Marxism the "perversion" of man's aspiration for justice (II:3) and the total "subversion of the meaning of truth" (VIII:4), the "denial of the human person, his liberty and his rights" (VII:9), as well as "the systematic and deliberate use of blind violence" (XI:7; also, II:2 and 3). It damns as "this shame of our time" that "the totalitarian and atheistic regimes" hold "whole nations in conditions of servitude which are unworthy of mankind" (XI:10). *In their flaming inquisitorial zeal to denounce Marxism, the authors of the Instruction do not realise their total loss of orientation and perspective, in that they began with an analysis of injustice and oppression against the poor in the Third World, especially in Latin America, and have ended up with a blitz against the socialist governments of Eastern Europe—which surely are not paragons of virtue.*

With what outsider's knowledge I have of Marxism, I must, in all honesty, dismiss the CDF's picture of Marxism, just as any decent non-Christian student of Christianity should feel obliged to dismiss the caricature of Christianity in terms of the ignominies of the dark ages, the Inquisition and witch-hunting, the crusades and colonialism, the slave trade and religious wars—which are real blots on the face of Christianity.

Neither do I feel any obligation or urge to defend Marxism or to write an apology for it in the face of the attacks against it by the

13. J. MARITAIN, *Moral Philosophy*, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1954, p. 216 f.

14. Cf. MARITAIN, *ibid.*, pp. 240 ff. For TOYNBEE (*A Study of History* and *A Historian's Approach to Religion*) this characteristic of Marxism is a matter of course. D. McLELLAN makes this point in "Response to McGovern", *JES* 22 (1985) pp. 534-6. Even the CDF recognises the Christian roots of Marxism when it asserts (somewhat presumptuously, no doubt) that the contemporary "quest for freedom and aspiration for liberation... have their first source in the Christian heritage," which "remains true even in places where they assume erroneous forms and even oppose the Christian view of man and his destiny" (5). Only the CDF refuses to rightly conclude from this recognition that, therefore, the Church is bound to maintain, also with Marxism, a relationship of good will and self-critical and creative give and take.

CDF.<sup>15</sup> My one and only concern is my Christian faith and its implications and responsibilities in the world of today. And among these responsibilities is the one to positively and creatively take up the challenge of Marxism, which I cannot wish away. But I must confess that the doctrine of the CDF, as set forth in the Instruction, is not only not helpful but that it is a positive hindrance in my way. Therefore, wanting to "collaborate loyally and with a spirit of dialogue with the Magisterium of the Church" (XI:4), I go on to make before the CDF certain points which I consider fundamental. I might, however, add in passing that it is sadly ironic that the Vatican has opted to return to the pre-Conciliar attitude of self-righteous polemics and anathemas, while the Marxist regimes in such key socialist states as Cuba China and the Soviet Union are apparently becoming more and more open to religion.

## II

To start with, I quote a hermeneutical principle, laid down by the Instruction, to which I have referred already and which I consider of fundamental importance: "The first condition for any analysis is a total openness to the reality to be described" (VII:13). I am constrained to observe that the CDF's description of the reality of Marxism implies the grossest violation of this principle. This analysis is woefully simplistic and totally negative; it originates from a triumphalistic and self-righteous spirit and is fed palpably by prejudice and resentment.

In my best judgment, the doctrine of the Instruction in relation to Marxism is neither a reaffirmation nor any sort of development of the conciliar and papal doctrine; it rather represents a reversal, indeed, total rejection, of the latter.

Neither John XXIII nor the Council dealt with Marxism directly and explicitly; but their attitude, evident in many implicit references, to Marxism, if naturally critical, still exudes benevolence as well as shared hopes and concerns. Paul VI explicitly dealt with Marxism in *Octogesima Adveniens*. As our earlier analysis has shown,<sup>16</sup> Paul VI's fundamental rule is *discernment in the midst of active commitment for a positive transformation of society*. In fact, the entire concluding section (nn. 48-52) of the Apostolic Letter is an "insistent call to

15. I have contributed my own mite to a dialogic and creative critique of Marxism in *The Hope We Share: A New Christian Approach to Marxism* (see n. 8 above).

16. See the article cited under n. 1, above, p. 407.



action" (48), "in order to make structures evolve so as to adapt them to the real needs of today" (50). If Paul VI warns against the dangers of the Marxist ideology and of the *uncritical* use of Marxist socio-political analysis, he also makes it sufficiently clear that this warning is not meant to exclude either creative theoretical dialogue or critical collaboration involving a discerning use of Marxist analysis. His concern is that Christians should assert, in the very midst of varying, even mutually opposing, socio-political options (from among whom a Marxist option seems to be by no means excluded) the "specific character of the Christian contribution for a positive transformation of society" (36; cf. also 49, 50, 51). Equally important, *whenever* Paul VI points up the dangers of Marxism, he carefully counterbalances this warning with a no less clear warning against the dangers of capitalism or liberalism (cf. 26, 34, 35, 37, 49). The Christian can give himself to neither the Marxist nor the liberal ideology (26). Both call for "careful discernment" (34, 35); both are incapable of solving "the great human problems of living together in justice and equality" (37). The "selfish particularism" of liberalism is as alien to the spirit of Christianity as the "oppressive totalitarianism" of Marxism (49).

The CDF, in sharp contrast, shows no trace of Paul VI's dynamic hope, sophistication and impartiality. For the CDF, Marxism is evil, wholly and unredeemably evil, hence to be kept as far away as possible. Sure enough, it quotes Paul VI's warning against uncritical use of Marxist analysis (VII:7). But, well in the tradition of the cynic who would quote the Bible to "prove" that "there is no God," the CDF quotes from *Octogesima Adveniens* n. 34, while carefully ignoring the two following paragraphs, evidently meant by the Pope to counterbalance and qualify what was said in 34.

The CDF's manner of dealing with Marxism has other grave implications besides. Whether or not we care to recognise the historical (and, perhaps, more than accidental) links between Christianity and Marxism, it is impossible to deny or ignore a certain community between the two in terms of ideals and values. Even Cardinal Ratzinger has agreed, however grudgingly, that there are "some valid elements,"<sup>17</sup> a "nucleus of truth"<sup>18</sup> in Marxism. One presumes that he would also agree that even this nucleus of truth is "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men,"<sup>19</sup> "a sort of secret presence of

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17. See n. 5 above.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Vatican II, *Declaration on Non-Christian Religions*, n. 2.

God,"<sup>20</sup> that this nucleus of truth in Marxism, too, must be "healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon, and the joy of men."<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, however, by demonising Marxism the CDF has abjured its responsibility and placed itself squarely in the Manichaeic tradition.

If that is the theological and theoretical issue, there are other considerations of a factual and practical nature. For, no matter how perfectly insulated the CDF would want Christians to remain *vis-a-vis* Marxism, the *fact* is that the latter, ever since its birth in the middle of the last century, has profoundly influenced social thinking and praxis. Neither capitalism nor the Church's own social doctrine has been free from ideas and values incorporated from Marxism. The obvious and inescapable truth is that today it is impossible to remain uninfluenced by Marxism, so much so that the only viable and responsible course of action is to let this influence be conscious and well discerned.

Marxism is a highly complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. It belongs squarely in the Western tradition and is marked by some of the worst traits of the latter, including its pseudo-messianism and a blind faith in progress, based on "almighty" science and technology. All the defects and dangers on which the CDF lay accusing fingers *are* objectively present in Marxism.

But then there are *other* considerations. Marxism is, originally and essentially, a *critique* of capitalism which is based on private property, devoid of all social obligation and control. As the critique of capitalism, its chief driving force is a rebellious love for the poor and oppressed and an uncompromising hatred of oppression and exploitation. When its votaries turn to it as to some "almighty"<sup>22</sup> theory of the new socialist or communist society they want to attain, it must inevitably turn monstrous. Hence the many living anomalies in socialist states and Marxist parties. But that does not mean that, *as a critique*, Marxism has not worked beneficially for vast masses of people.

Furthermore, in its functioning, Marxism has not remained unchanged through its history. One can at least wonder whether Karl Marx, who in his lifetime refused to be known as a "Marxist",

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20. Vatican II, *Decree on the Missions*, n. 10.

21. *Ibid.*

22. According to a famous dictum of Lenin, "Marxism is almighty because it is true"!

would recognize what is currently known as Marxism. Neither is Marxism the same in the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China, for example, where it worked as the main force of internal national revolutions. in Eastern Europe, where it was practically imposed and is maintained through brute military power, and in a country like Cuba, which was converted to "Marxism," thanks to the bullying of the United States.

As for us in the Third World, politically and economically our chief enemy is the transnational capitalism of our former "masters," which has assumed the forms of the "international imperialism of money" and nuclear and other militarism. In the ongoing struggle of the Third World countries to maintain their political independence and attain a measure of economic independence, it is the Soviet Union and other socialist countries that have by and large consistently stood by these countries.

Speaking about Latin America in particular, even the CDF has joined the liberation theologians in identifying the most acute problem of the Latin American poor as

the seizure of the vast majority of wealth by an oligarchy of owners bereft of social consciousness, the practical absence or the shortcomings of a rule of law, military dictatorships making a mockery of human rights, the corruption of certain powerful officials, the savage practices of some foreign capital interests (VII:6).

What is thus, so to say, phenomenologically described, is nothing but capitalism with its octopus-like hold. The specific Latin American name of this capitalism is the "National Security State," whose credo has this article among others:

Nationalism is, must be, and cannot possibly be other than an Absolute One in itself, and its purpose is as well an Absolute End—at least as long as the Nation continues as such. There is no place, nor should there be, nor could there be place for nationalism as a simple instrument of another purpose that transcends it.<sup>23</sup>

As was pointed out above, this capitalism, which is the central concern of the Latin American masses in general and of liberation theology in particular, is left wholly untackled by the CDF, which instead lets loose its blitz upon Marxism and the East European socialist regimes.

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23. Quoted by Jose COMBLIN, *The Church and the National-Security State*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1979, p. 78.

It is not, by any means, that we have to subscribe to the thesis, no matter who firmly believe in and fervently propagate it, that the entire world is to be seen as divided between the camps of Capitalism and Socialism, locked in the ultimate struggle and that we in the Third World have no option of our own except to join either camp. Ever since the inception of the cold war, leaders of the Third World have made known their determination to affirm the non-aligned identity of the Third World and to assert our right to look at the world and its ideologies through our own eyes. Christians in the Third World have their share of responsibility in this matter of discernment and choice. And liberation theology understands itself as part of this process of discernment and world interpretation by Third World Christians through their own eyes and in terms of their own lived experiences. Hence the necessity to be wary also about exhortations and denunciations issuing from the West.

The Vatican is a "sovereign state". As such, it draws its origin, not from Jesus Christ or his Gospel, but, remotely, from the Roman empire and, directly and immediately, from a concordat of the papacy with Mussolini. The Vatican state has very considerable wealth (whose exact nature and size are jealously guarded secrets). In terms of its economic and financial interests, the Vatican belongs squarely in the capitalist First World and is closely allied to U.S. transnational capitalism.

That the Vatican *must* have its own ideology for defending and promoting its economic and political interests, that this ideology *must* be closely linked to transnational capitalism, and that it must be given out as pure and authentic *theology*—these are inevitabilities which we may forget only at our peril.

Ever since Emperor Constantine "established" and "endowed" the Church, ever since the ministers of the once poor and hunted Church became monarchically ruling hierarchs, allied to other ruling classes, the Church and its leadership have been through crises and crimes of the worst kind. Christians who know their Church and its human leadership to be indeed human, all too human, who know that God can write straight through crooked lines, need not be shocked out of their faith or their *Mother the Church* by such a scandalous situation. But our loyalty to our divinely human Church and to its human leadership does not absolve us from the responsibility to be vigilant and discerning, to prophetically summon the hierarchical leadership of the Church back to the true and authentic Gospel. We need not,

indeed should not swallow as pure and unadulterated theological doctrine all that is presented as such. Guided ultimately by God's Spirit alone and with unflinching loyalty to the cause of the poor of God, we must listen and follow, with the discernment and courage which the Spirit alone can impart.

### *Post-Script*

This article is appearing months after the encyclical on the Holy Spirit (dated 18 and released 30 May 1986) which, according to sections of the Indian Catholic media, has "condemned" Marxism. A comment seems to be due.

While the encyclical contains no indication that the Pope's evaluation of Marxism is different from the CDF's, neither does it seem to condemn Marxism.

Marxism is not among the items of "evil" which the Pope (urged by his "upright conscience . . . to call good and evil by their proper name") lists, quoting Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, n. 13 (43).<sup>24</sup> Neither is Marxism mentioned or evidently meant when he inveighs against *atheism*, which (originating from the "Father of lies") considers God "*as a source of danger and threat to man*," challenges him "to become the adversary of God," and seeks "*to root out religion on the ground that religion causes the radical 'alienation' of man*, as if man were dispossessed of his humanity when, accepting the idea of God, he attributes to God what belongs to man, and exclusively to man!" Hence we have a process of thought and historico-sociological praxis, the Pope goes on, in which the rejection of God has reached the point of declaring his "death". An absurdity both in concept and in expression! (38).

This description will best suit not Marxism but what the Marxists would identify as the "degenerate bourgeois" atheism of the 19th century German rationalism, in general, and the Feuerbachian variety in particular. It will also very well suit Nietzsche's dementedly anti-Christian atheism and, to a lesser extent, that of the existentialist Sartre.<sup>25</sup>

24. Here, as elsewhere below, emphases are of the original.

25. One might here naturally also think of the very bourgeois "Death of God Theology" of the late 1960s! Whether the concept and expression "*death*" of God, is so obviously and outrageously an absurdity or, indeed, the fundamental truth of the Christian faith, need not be discussed here.

The encyclical (which in the Vatican edition runs into 141 pages) names Marxism only once, identifying it as the "clearest expression" of the "external dimension" of the "resistance to the Spirit," in that it follows the "desires of the flesh." Says the Pope:

The system which has developed most and carried to its extreme practical consequences this form of thought, ideology and praxis is dialectical and historical materialism, which is still recognized as the essential core of Marxism (56).

The Pope goes on to point out how this "characteristically atheistic" doctrine explains "spirit" as "derived from matter" and religion "as a kind of idealistic illusion." He concludes the paragraph:

Those who wish to live by the Spirit, accepting and corresponding to his salvific activity, cannot but reject the external and internal tendencies and claims of the 'flesh,' also in its ideological and historical expression as anti-religious 'materialism' (56).

Now, whether or not this amounts to a condemnation, the Pope has, so to say, gone out of his way to thus single out Marxism for reproach.

On the other hand, even though he (just tangentially) mentions "the arms race and . . . its inherent danger of nuclear self-destruction" and "the grave situation of vast areas of our planet, marked by death-dealing poverty and famine," as being among the contemporary "signs and symptoms of death" (57), he does not stop to consider whether *capitalism*, as a system and ideology, could have anything to do with them. Neither does he seem to be overly concerned about these "signs and symptoms of death" or about the necessity to identify their causes and remedies. It is almost as though the Pope surveys the "vast areas of our planet, marked by the death-dealing poverty and famine" with the detachment of an explorer. That these "vast areas" are all in the *Third World*, which is directly the gift of the colonial imperialism of the First World, and is maintained in its condition of growing desperation and dependence on the latter, whose acknowledged ideology is capitalism, does not appear to be of any importance.

If capitalism thus wholly escapes the encyclical's attention, so does, naturally, *justice*, which is never mentioned;<sup>26</sup> so does the al-

26. Indeed, on this point again the Pope has gone out of his way to break the traditionally papal linkings of peace and justice and speaks of peace as "*the fruit of love*" (67).

ready crushing and still growing *debt burden* on the Third World countries, thanks to the galloping affluence of the favoured sections in the First World; so does, too, the *consumerist materialism* and *practical atheism* reigning in the "Christian" West.

Neither does it seem to matter that such consumerist materialism and practical atheism, *not* their theoretical counterparts, are the really soul-destroying banes, according to the Gospel; that the so-called "materialism" and "atheism" could be the direct result of the former and the violent protest against them; or that, at least for many, if not for most, "atheism" is an ultimate form of *suffering*, added to their condition of material deprivation and desperation (the source of their "desires of the flesh"), not an option in which they find pleasure and rest.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, one begins to wonder, to whom is this encyclical addressed or what impact it is purported to make. The world press effectively ignored it, though it was released by Cardinal Hamer at a convened press conference. Periodicals like *Time* magazine and *News-Week*, which dutifully report papal outings and hikings, passed over the encyclical in total silence. Why, India's Catholic News Review, *The Examiner*, has not to date (I write on 4 July) carried a report or comment on this document, meant, according to its Introduction, to complete John Paul II's trilogy of doctrinal encyclicals—the other two being, *Redemptor Hominis* (The Redeemer of Man) and *Dives in Misericordia* (God Rich in Mercy)—and to prepare the Church for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

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27. Here are the refrain and first stanza of the famous "Song of the Silesian Weavers", quoted by Engels in his essay "Rapid Progress of Communism in Germany":

Without a tear in their grim eyes,  
They sit at the loom, the rage of despair in their faces;  
"We have suffered and hungered long enough;  
Old Germany, we are weaving, we are weaving a shroud for thee  
And weaving it with a triple curse.  
"We are weaving, weaving!  
"The first curse to the God, the blind and deaf god  
Upon whom we relied, as children on their father;  
In whom we hoped and trusted withal,  
He has mocked us, he has cheated us nevertheless.  
"We are weaving, weaving!"

K. MARX and F. ENGELS, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1975, p. 232.

# Contextual Missionary Theology From Orbis

*A Bold Publishing Venture*

David Bosch\*

**I**N RECENT years *Missionalia* has reviewed more books published by ORBIS (Maryknoll, NY 10545) than from any other publisher.

And several other reviews are in the pipeline. If one keeps in mind that ORBIS is, by American standards at least, a small publishing company, the fact becomes even more remarkable—so much so that the editor of *Missionalia* has decided to introduce the readers of this journal explicitly to this extraordinary publishing house, and to include a number of short reviews of and references to recent ORBIS publications. This review article is, at the same time, intended as a tribute to Philip Scharper, the man who co-founded ORBIS in 1970, served as its editor-in-chief for 15 years, and succumbed to a stroke on 5 May 1985. In a very real sense Scharper was ORBIS BOOKS. He has been succeeded as editor-in-chief by John Eagleson who had been his colleague at ORBIS for a good many years.

ORBIS BOOKS is housed in a modest building on the premises of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, commonly known as "Maryknoll Mission", on the outskirts of Ossining, N.Y., 55 kilometres up the Hudson River from New York City. The Chinese-style architecture of Maryknoll's main building indicates that China used to be the major mission field of Maryknollers. After 1949, however, the missionaries were expelled from that country and the society shifted its focus to other parts of the globe, notably Latin America.

When Scharper took over Maryknoll Publications in 1970 he restructured the entire enterprise, renamed it ORBIS BOOKS (indicating that from now on the publishing house's concern would be the entire globe), and stated that his aim was "to make Americans more aware of and responsive to the problems of the Third World, those emerging nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America where two-thirds of the world's people live." Whereas other houses occasionally published First World authors writing on Third World situations, Scharper and his colleagues manage to enlist Third World theologians to write from their own perspectives, from the "underside of history", and to reflect on the human conditions of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and oppression in the light of the gospel.

These were themes that were, understandably, rather uncomfortable for a prosperous First World. Even so, First World theologians and church people began to buy and read ORBIS books. The pub-

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\* We are grateful to the author and editor of *Missionalia*, a review from South Africa, for permission to reprint this article which first appeared in *Missionalia* 13 (1985) 121-131. What the author says about the indebtedness of *Missionalia* to Orbis Books applies equally to VIDYAROTTI.



lisher's best-seller is Gustavo Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation*, translated from Spanish and first published by Orbis in 1973 [VIDYAJYOTI (1975) 475]. To date it has sold 70,000 copies. Through this and other publications ORBIS has become the conduit by which the West receives Third World theology. A few years ago Scharper could say, without fear of contradiction: "No comparable house anywhere deals exclusively with matters of Third World concern and the impact of that concern . . . on North American theology . . . North American theologians are beginning to enter into serious dialogue with Third World theology."

ORBIS's authors include Third World theologians such as Leonardo Boff, Juan Segundo, Ernesto Cardenal, Jon Sobrino, Hugo Assmann, Enrique Dussel, Helder Camara, Julio de Santa Ana and Oscar Romero from Latin America, Kosuke Koyama, Marianne Katoppo, Choan-Seng Song, Raymond Fung and Tissa Balasuriya from Asia, and Allan Boesak, John Mbiti, Guinyai Muzorewa, Bakole wa Ilunga, Kwesi Dickson and F. Eboussi Boulaga from Africa, but also several Western theologians with keen interest in Third World theology and a new understanding of the mission of the church, people such as Paul Knitter, Sharon Welch, Robert J. Schreiter, Michel Clevenot, Georges Casalis, Norman Gottwald, Joseph Healey, Arnulf Camps and Vincent J. Donovan.

Many of these authors would probably call themselves "liberation theologians" and it is clear that ORBIS BOOKS is attempting to give this theological approach a hearing. It is, however, by no means confining itself to liberation theology. Some of its authors are, as a matter of fact, rather critical of liberation theology. And the publishers deny categorically that they are—wittingly or unwittingly—propagating Marxism. In an interview a few years ago Scharper pointed out that, of the 160 or so titles ORBIS had in print then, only nine dealt with Marx (whose presence and influence in the Third World is inescapable, whether we like it or not); three of the nine books rejected Marxism completely; three were severely critical; and three had serious reservations.

From the outset Scharper wanted a publishing house that would not be exclusively Roman Catholic. Although most ORBIS authors are Catholics, an increasing number of Protestants are publishing with Orbis—people like Koyama, Boesak, Casalis, Alves, Cragg and Muzorewa, to mention only a few names from a recent ORBIS catalogue. Nor are the Protestant authors all from the "ecumenical" camp. In 1979 ORBIS published *Christianity in Culture* by Charles Kraft of Fuller School of World Mission [VIDYAJYOTI (1983) 364]. This year it brought out *The Expectation of the Poor*, by Guillermo (William) Cook, General Director of the Latin American Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies. ORBIS is therefore clearly not motivated by ideological considerations; its overriding concern is simply to give a hearing to those who speak on behalf of the marginal peoples of the earth, thus assisting the church world-wide to reflect anew on its mission. We pay tribute to the memory of Philip Scharper and our best wishes go with John Eagleson and his staff as they continue the good work!

In the rest of this article I would like to offer brief reviews of

some recent Orbis publications. This is not intended to be more than a sample of the rich menu Orbis has prepared. I shall group the books according to the categories into which they fit best.

### HERMENEUTICS

In a sense, all ORBIS BOOKS are concerned with hermeneutics. Some of them, however, concentrate specifically on *biblical* hermeneutics, on how we are to read and understand the Bible in a world of poverty and oppression. We examine some of these first.

First, there is *The Practice of Jesus* by Hugo Echegaray (1984) [VIDYAJYOTI (1985) 313]. Echegaray died in 1979, at the age of 39, only four months after having completed this book. Gutierrez wrote the preface in which he explains the genius of Echegaray's ministry and theology. Echegaray takes Jesus' practice as the point of reference for all theological engagement. He attempts—with the help of careful historical analysis and considerations—to locate the practice of Jesus in first century Palestine, and then to use that practice as the matrix from which to theologise in a responsible and relevant manner. To judge the case of Jesus, he states,

we must take account of the insurmountable historical distance separating us from his world. Between his time and ours irreversible qualitative changes have occurred. This fact forbids us to make mechanical transpositions from the one period to the other; to do so would be proof only of naivete. If we unconsciously project our own situation into the past, we necessarily distort the past. If, conversely, we attempt a literal revival of that past in our own day, we shall be weakening its real power without realizing it (34).

We cannot make use of the life and practice of Jesus, because that Jesus rose again from the grave:

It was the Easter faith that enabled this community to see the practice of Jesus as the norm, the criterion, for understanding its own situation and mission in the world. The deepening of the Easter faith meant an ever more enlightened grasp of the actions of the earthly Jesus. Far from weakening with the passage of time, the memory of those actions grew ever stronger as faith in the risen Lord intensified. Thus the community's relation to Jesus Christ was at one and the same time an experience of the glorified Lord as invisibly present in it, a historical remembering of the past events in which Jesus had played a part, and a future-oriented theological interpretation, based on the practice and the resurrection of Christ . . . (16).

In a very real sense, therefore, Jesus "inspired his disciples to prolong the logic of his own actions in a creative way amid . . . new and different historical circumstances" (pp. xv-xvi). And the cue toward understanding those actions is that Jesus practice resisted being identified with the practices of his contemporaries (p.xi).

Georges Casalis' *Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies* (1984) [VIDYAJYOTI (1985) 145] is saying essentially the same as Echegaray but in a completely different manner. Casalis, a retired French Protestant theologian, pleads for an *inductive* theology which provides a way between the sloganeering of many deductive theologies and the

aloofness of arm-chair theologians who are only interested in reconstructing theological history: "There is no room for mere memorization and repetition", Casalis says. "What is needed is inventiveness combined with fidelity, creativity and imagination combined with authenticity" (p. 47). There is, in fact, no such thing as a truly deductive theology, for "correct ideas don't fall from the skies" but come "from a partial and partisan reading of biblical . . . texts" (p. 178). Theology always promotes specific interests. "Tell me what your theology is, and I will tell you what your class option is, and vice versa" (p. 178). The problem with the "dominant" theology is that it is unaware of the fact that it is determined by the interests of those who hold power while claiming that it is derived directly from Scripture. Thus Casalis resolutely opts for an "inductive" approach, re-reading the gospel and Christian tradition by beginning with praxis (p. 25 and elsewhere). And since neutrality is impossible, he sets out to propound a "countertheology" in opposition to the "dominant theology". The end result is a profoundly disturbing book which deserves a wide readership particularly among "Westerners." Not that Casalis is always convincing. His infatuation, for instance, with the "new humanity" of post revolutionary society" in countries like Cuba, Vietnam and Mozambique (pp. 116, 117, 141, 165, 169, and elsewhere), is rather naive.

We now turn to Segundo Galilea's *The Beatitudes: To Evangelize as Jesus Did* (1984; 108 pp.; \$ 5.95). This is as much a book on evangelism (or "evangelisation") as it is often called in Roman Catholic circles) as on missionary spirituality. Galilea, a Chilean priest, compares and reflects on the Beatitudes of both Luke and Matthew. He regards the Beatitudes as

an indispensable guide to evangelization. For evangelization must be faithful to the truth about Jesus, faithful to the truth about the kingdom, and faithful to the imitation of Christ the Evangelizer. The Beatitudes show us evangelization through the eyes of Jesus (pp. 9-10).

To the poor, Jesus proclaims the "God of the forsaken" (pp. 12-20); to the rich, the "God of universal hope" (pp. 21-27). The rich are thus not excluded from the kingdom but they need an evangelistic message that differs from that addressed to the poor. They are called to become just and merciful (p. 24) and to be reconciled with their oppressed brothers and sisters (p. 26). Reconciliation should, however, never be "something to be used as a cloak for social abuses, crimes, and sin" (p. 78). In fact, the conditions for reconciliation include "the reestablishment of justice" and "the forgiveness of one another's offences" (p. 78-80).

Galilea's booklet offers valuable insights into what mission and evangelism means today; at the same time it avoids the one-sidedness that is in evidence in much of contemporary Latin American theology.

Our fourth author is Joseph A. Grassi who teaches at the University of Santa Clara. His *Broken Bread and Broken Bodies* (1985) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) 280] is a sustained attempt to relate the Lord's

**Supper to world hunger.** In a world in which an estimated fifteen million people die of starvation each year and more than five hundred million suffer from acute hunger and severe malnutrition, it is impossible to regard the Lord's Supper as a storm-free spiritual island removed from the realities of life. Rather, in breaking the eucharistic bread Christians pledge to become like Jesus: to assimilate his lifestyle and obey his word.

Part 1 of Grassi's book (pp. 1-57) briefly surveys the social, economic, political and religious forces at work in first century Palestine and examines the New Testament understanding of discipleship and its relation to Jesus' life and ministry. The second part (pp. 59-94) emphasises that the Lord's Supper is both a sacrament and an "action-sign". In the post-Easter community the Lord's Supper became the principal meeting place for Christians. The nature of this meal was one of sharing with the hungry and poor. Committed reflection on the significance of this foundational institution should aid Christians today in developing a new "food language" for the world. Grassi highlights what this meant in practice in the early church (pp 85-90) and may mean today (pp. 90-94). The book concludes with a list of resources for "hunger committees" (in the U.S.A.) and some recent Catholic and Protestant church statements on the problem of hunger.

Next we turn to a North American evangelical steeped in the tradition and theology of Wheaton, Thomas D. Hanks. He produced a book with the interesting title *God so Loved the Third World* (1983; xviii-152 pp.; \$ 8.95)—a book which grew out of his encounter with Latin American realities and his teaching of the Old Testament at the Seminario Biblico Latinoamericano in San Jose, Costa Rica. After eighteen years teaching in a Latin American context Hanks knows that, for him, the Bible has become a new book. He has discovered it as a book written for the poor, a book which has to be read from the perspective of the oppressed. In his seminary preparation in the U.S.A. he never dreamed he was preparing for a career as a professor of "subversive literature" (p. xiii).

Orlando Costa's foreword and Hanks's preface promise a very exciting and incisive book. What follows is, however, disappointing in several respects. The book's major value lies in the fact that it attempts to bring together evangelical theology and liberation theology on the basis of Scripture, but this is done with the aid of a rather questionable hermeneutic. This is especially true of Part One, where Hanks surveys the Old Testament vocabulary of oppression (pp. 3-40). It is no longer defensible to study words in isolation from their contexts, particularly if this is done with an almost total disregard of the various types and historical settings of Old Testament texts. The New Testament section (pp. 43-60) is in this respect more acceptable, since it attempts to interpret the books of Acts and James within their overall contexts. It is, however, incorrect to deduce, in a simplistic manner, that all of the New Testament concurs in the deductions Hanks draws from Acts and James and that the Old and New Testament teachings are virtually the same on the subject under discussion.

In Chapter 5 (pp. 73-96) Hanks offers a contextual re-reading of Is 52:13-53:12 from Latin America. He discovers here the pentecostal teaching on healing, the evangelical doctrine of penal substitution, and liberation theology's theme of freedom from oppression—three dimensions which illuminate and mutually strengthen each other. The conclusion is probably correct. I am less sure that the

path Hanks follows to reach the conclusion is hermeneutically sound. For people who share his rather biblicistic view of Scripture, however, the reading of this book may perhaps serve as a first (rude?) awakening to the theological significance of global poverty and oppression.

### THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIES

#### The Third World Context

Three of the books under review fall in this more general category. The first is perhaps the most difficult to classify. It is, in a sense, a book on hermeneutics, and should therefore perhaps have been dealt with above. It contains, in addition, a number of First World contributions. I nevertheless believe that it fits best here, under "Third World Theologies".

I am referring to *Doing Theology in a Divided World* (ed. Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres; 1985; xx-218 pp.; \$ 11.95). The volume contains the papers presented at the sixth conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), which took place in Geneva in January 1983. The previous five compendium volumes of the EATWOT conferences were also published by Orbis; like this one, most of them were edited by Fabella and Torres. What makes the present volume unique is that this time Third World theologians were not talking to and among themselves. In Geneva they entered into dialogue with a selected number of First World theologians (from Europe and North America). In this volume no really authentic dialogue develops, however, since virtually all the Western theologians invited to participate were people who were in essential agreement with the theological thrust of EATWOT. I mention, in this respect, only the names of Dorothee Sölle, Rosemary Ruether, J.B. Metz, Letty Russell and Georges Casalis. Letty Russell admits that the First World theologians were invited and included "not on our own terms, but on the terms of those who were willing to let us share in their work" (p. 207). Ion Bria, a Roumanian Orthodox theologian at the WCC head office, was the only participant who expressed any direct criticism of the proceedings (pp. 212-14).

A great variety of Third World and liberation theologies and practices were given attention at the conference; feminist theology (van de Walle, Ruether, Russell), basic ecclesial communities (Richard), the Devasarana movement in Sri Lanka (Wikremesinghe), the Union of Swedish Christian Labour Members (Frostin), Black Theology in South Africa (Goba) and in the U.S.A. (Cone), etc. Much of all this is, however, a rehash of what has been said before, and often better. Contributions which may be singled out as above average include those of Metz ("Standing at the end of the Eurocentric era of Christianity"), Casalis ("Methodology for a West European theology of liberation"—valuable insights supplementing his book reviewed elsewhere in this article) and Rayan ("Reconceiving theology in the Asian context"—the only contribution that seriously grapples with the issue of religious pluralism).

Our next book, edited by Thomas P. Fenton and Mary J. Heffron, is entitled *Third World Resource Directory* (1984) [VIDYAJYOTI (1985) 428]. This is, in fact, an incredibly comprehensive reference tool, a thesaurus of resources superbly organised and indexed, on issues of justice and peace in the Third World. Part One deals with geographical areas: the Third World in general, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Part Two lists materials available on relevant issues: food, hunger, agribusiness; human rights; militarism, peace, disarmament; transnational corporations; women. Part Three contains the indexes referring the reader to the more detailed descriptions in the first two parts. The index categories include organisations, books, periodicals, pamphlets and articles, audio-visuals, bibliographies, directories, curriculum resources, and simulation games. The end result is an eminently useful directory which provides access to all kinds of background materials. The target audience is primarily North American.

Our next books is from the pen of a Belgian missiologist, Omer Degrijse, CICM, *Going Forth: Missionary Consciousness in Third World Catholic Churches* (1984). [VIDYAJYOTI (1985) 378]. Many recent studies have shown that the centre of gravity of Christianity is tilting to the South; by the end of this century Africa may be the continent with the largest number of Christians. Degrijse shows that this shift is not only due to Western (=Northern) missionary input but increasingly also to the growing missionary consciousness in the young church. He reflects on the situation in the Roman Catholic Church only, but the same dynamic is operative in Protestant churches, perhaps even more dramatically.

### Latin America

The Maryknoll Mission society has for a long time had a very special interest in Latin America. This is also evident from the fact that the majority of books from ORBIS deal with the struggle of the church in that continent, to which we now turn.

Books written against the background of poverty, violence and exploitation in Latin America feature prominently in Orbis prospectuses. One not so very recent book in the category is Volume 4 of Ernesto Cardenal's *The Gospel in Solentiname* (1982) [VIDYAJYOTI (1984) 363]. Like its predecessors, it consists of transcripts of tape-recorded discussions of Bible passages by Nicaraguan peasants on the Solentiname archipelago on Lake Nicaragua during the Somoza dictatorship and the Sandinista revolt. Cardenal was the priest of the poor and barely literate Solentiname farm workers and fisherfolk and, like them, he was an ardent supporter of the Sandinista cause. This political bias colours the interpretation of Scripture of this remarkable basic Christian community but, of course, no interpretation is free from some bias. What is important is that this is a theology of the people; a theology born out of reflections on the faith in the face

of the harsh realities of oppression, violence and the struggle for survival. Small wonder, then, that Marcelino, Olivia, Rebecca, Felipe, old Tomas Pena and the others, frequently come up with truly surprising perspectives on the story of Jesus as recorded in our four gospels.

All these discussions were recorded before July 19, 1979. On that day the Sandinistas triumphed over the Somoza regime and since then Nicaragua is being ruled by the Sandinistas. Cardenal, erstwhile priest in remote Solentiname, is now Minister of Culture of Nicaragua. Many conflicting reports reach us from that still troubled land. The reader of *The Gospel in Solentiname* cannot help wondering what has become of the people of those islands and of the values for which they stood.

James McGinnis's recent book, *Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua* (1985; xiv-162 pp.; \$ 7.95) is, in a sense, an attempt to reply to the question suggested in the last sentence of the previous paragraph. McGinnis, a staff member of the Institute for Peace and Justice in St Louis in the U.S.A., is deeply disturbed by his country's official policy of opposition against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and its support for the "contras" (anti-Sandinista guerillas). The military squeeze on Nicaragua operates particularly out of neighbouring Honduras and Costa Rica. McGinnis's book pleads the cause of the Nicaraguan revolution and the process of national reconstruction in the face of overwhelming odds, particularly the current war which—as he sees it—is engineered at least to some extent by the U.S.A. He wants to present the story of the people of Nicaragua to the people of North America and he does this by telling his readers about health care services, literacy, campaigns, youth centres, a solidarity buying project, etc. High prominence is given to the projects launched in deeply troubled Jalapa close to the Honduran border, and the general situation there. At the end of the book several North American groups and projects are listed with addresses and telephone numbers, and readers in the U.S.A. in particular are urged to express solidarity with the Nicaraguan people in a tangible way. The situation in Nicaragua remains confused and the churches are internally deeply divided. The latest issue of the bimonthly publication of Latin American documentation *Ladoc* (July/Aug. 1985), for instance, carries two articles in which opposing views within the Roman Catholic Church are aired: one by Bishop Vega, president of the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops Conference, and a response by Fr Molina in which Bishop Vega's claims and arguments are sharply refuted.

Another book passionately partisan towards the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua is Teofilo Cabestrero's *Minister of God, Ministers of the People* (1983) [Vidyajyoti (1986)]. It contains the life stories and testimonies of three Catholic priests who have joined the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) and now serve in the post-Somoza government, but who have been suspended from their priestly duties by the Roman Catholic Church. The first story is that of Ernesto Cardenal, Minister of Culture, whom we have already met as author of *The Gospel in Solentiname*. Cardenal defends his political career:

"What I did in Solentiname, I now do on a larger scale", but he adds: "Being a minister of culture is a cross for me. I'm not a politician. I'm a monk, I'm a poet." The second story is that of Fernando Cardenal, Ernesto's younger brother. He explains: "I saw that the FSLN was the good Samaritan rescuing wounded Nicaragua. I couldn't refuse them without offending God." So he vows: "I'm a priest forever. And I'm committed to this revolution to death". Lastly, we meet Miguel d' Escoto, Nicaragua's foreign minister and the person who, incidentally, as Director of Social Communications of the Maryknoll Society, invited Philip Scharper back in 1970 to become editor-in-chief of *Orbis*. D'Escoto's *apologia*: "I'm a priest—a missionary priest, essentially. I travel for the cause of peace, justice, and the dignity of my people". Elsewhere he says: "Taking part in my people's struggle was for me a most profound religious experience."

This is a book which raises many questions. On the other hand, the sincerity of the three men who see no tension between being "ministers of God" and being "ministers of the people" cannot be gainsaid. Robert McAfee Brown's "Preface" provides a helpful background to the book, as does Cabestrero's "Introduction: priests in the Nicaragua government."

The next book takes us to Nicaragua's equally troubled neighbour, El Salvador. It is Archbishop Oscar Romero's *Voice of the Voiceless* (1985; 202 pp.; \$ 9.95). This remarkable man, who was shot by an assassin while celebrating Mass on March 24, 1980, is in the 1980s increasingly becoming for Latin America what Dietrich Bonhoeffer was for Europe in the late 1940s and 1950s.

The book opens with a chapter by Ignacio Martin-Baro, in which he explains how and why this conservative bishop whose election in 1977 as Archbishop of San Salvador immensely pleased the conservative establishment—in the short span of three years changed into a champion and spokesman of the poor and the oppressed. This happened "to the delight of the poor . . . and to the fury of the powerful, to the amazement of the government of El Salvador, the discomfiture of the Vatican, and the disquiet of the United States State Department . . ." (p. 1). The second chapter presents a perceptive interpretation by Jon Sobrino of Romero's theological pilgrimage and stand. This is followed by Romero's four pastoral letters: "The Easter Church" (April 1977), "The Church, the Body of Christ in history" (Aug. 1977), "The Church and popular political organizations" (Aug. 1978) and "The Church's mission and the national crisis" (Aug. 1979). In each successive letter the profile of the archbishop-of-the-poor emerges more clearly and his concern about El Salvador's road to greater suppression and increasing violence more profound. In an address in New York in Nov. 1979 Romero made mention of 406 assassinations in El Salvador.

By early 1980 the horizon began to grow even darker. Romero experiences it in almost apocalyptic terms. In his last interview, two weeks before his death, he said: "I have frequently been threatened with death. I must say that, as a Christian, I do not believe in death but in the resurrection. If they kill me, I will rise again in the people of El Salvador" (p. 50.) And on the



day of his death, immediately before the assassin's bullet hit him, he was saying with reference to the elements of the eucharist: "May this body immolated and this blood sacrificed for humans nourish us also, so that we may give our body and our blood to suffering and to pain—like Christ, not for self, but to bring about justice and peace for our people" (p. 193). This is how the people of El Salvador—in whom he has risen again—will remember their *Monsenor*.

The next slender volume comes out of both El Salvador and Nicaragua—Jon Sobrino, S.J., and Juan Hernandez Pico, S.J.: *Theology of Christian Solidarity* (1985) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) 59]. Sobrino's essay is on "Bearing with one another in faith" (pp. 1-41). It investigates the nature and implications of Christian solidarity particularly with the marginalised. This means, *inter alia*, that missionaries do not just go to evangelise the poor but themselves also need to be evangelised (p. 20); in fact, "the poor person is, for the missionary, first of all a question and a challenge" (p. 21), since "the poor offer their own poverty as a questioning of the way that being human is understood . . ." (p. 23).

Archbishop Romero also features prominently in this book. Sobrino concludes his essay with a paragraph in memory of Romero (pp. 38-41), whereas the Nicaraguan Hernandez Pico opens his essay (on "Solidarity with the poor and the unity of the church" pp. 43-98) with a reflection on an experience of solidarity with Romero at Puebla (pp. 43-47). Then follows a paragraph on "solidarity in the Bible" (pp. 48-61). The remaining part of the essay attempts to flesh out what solidarity with the poor means in practice, particularly in a church which understands its role as that of both prophet and servant. Hernandez's understanding of mission (see pp. 91-4) is similar to Sobrino's: "... the purpose of any mission in history is to provide an avenue for the hope of the poor".

Another small book out of the Latin American crucible is that by the two brothers Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Salvation and Liberation*, subtitled "In search of a balance between faith and politics" (1984) [VIDYAJYOTI (1985) 250]. During the last year or so no Latin American priest has become as controversial as the Brazilian Franciscan, Leonardo Boff. On several occasions he was the target of attacks by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. In September 1984 the Congregation issued an important document entitled "Instruction on certain aspects of the Theology of Liberation". Although Leonardo Boff's name is not mentioned in the "Instruction", events both before and after its publication made it clear that he, in particular, was seen as somebody who was proposing "a new interpretation of Christianity," employing a "Marxist analysis" of the Latin American situation, and "subverting the meaning of truth and violence." Boff's own reaction to the "Instruction" reflects sadness rather than anger or protest: "The 'Instruction' doesn't represent the Latin American perspective, but the European one . . . This is the Third World seen from a palace window."

The impression I got—both from this book and Leonardo Boff's earlier *The Lord's Prayer: The Prayer of Integral Liberation* (1983) [VIDYAJYOTI (1983) 561] is not that the Boff's theology is tainted

with Marxism nor that they are subverting Christianity. Rather, both of them (Leonardo in particular) aim at understanding the message of Christianity as one of "integral liberation", in which the "vertical" and the "horizontal" are fully integrated. The result is a sophisticated theology intertwined with a very basic traditional piety. Clodovis Boff illustrates the same integration of faith and politics in his contribution to the book, which consists of a lively imaginary dialogue between a theologian, a Christian activist, and a parish priest. This slender volume is indeed an excellent introduction to the method and concerns of liberation theology.

First World theologians are increasingly interested in what happens in Latin America theological circles and churches. A few decades ago, the Latin American Roman Catholic Church appeared stagnant, superstitious and irrelevant. Now it is revealing a remarkable quality of pastoral leadership and involvement. The accompanying theological renewal manifests itself particularly in the area of *Christology*. This is the area on which Claus Bussmann of the University of Duisburg in West Germany reflects in his *Who Do You Say? Jesus Christ in Latin American Theology* (1985; vi-185 pp.; \$ 9.95), first published in German in 1980.

Christology has featured prominently in recent Latin American publications; some of the relevant titles (all of them from Orbis) are: *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time* (L. Boff, 1978), [VIDYAJYOTI (1980) 346], *Jesus of Nazareth: Meditations on his Humanity* (Jose Comblin, 1975) [Vidyajyoti (1980) 348], *The Practice of Jesus* (H. Echegaray, 1984—reviewed elsewhere in this article); *Following Jesus* (G. Segundo, 1981), *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach* (J. Sobrino, 1978) [VIDYAJYOTI (1979) 194-95] and *Faces of Jesus: Latin American Christologies* (ed. Jose Miguez Bonino, 1984) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) ]. All these books have one thing in common: they tend to emphasise the earthly Jesus rather than (though certainly not at the expense of) the risen and exalted Christ. Even the titles of some books reveal this emphasis—cf. these by Comblin, Echegaray, Segundo and Miguez Bonino. Latin American Christology is clearly *incarnational*. This emerges in Bussmann's brief survey of the Christologies of Latin American theologians, e.g., Assmann, Gutierrez, and others. He also addresses the issue of violence—which is a crucial one for Latin American Christians today—showing that the theologians' appeal to Jesus serves both the justification and the renunciation of the use of violence on the part of Christians engaged in the struggle for liberation (p. 10.). The book is well documented—the notes cover no less than 32 pages—and contains a short bibliography and a helpful index.

### Africa

In recent years Orbis has also begun to publish African authors. One such book is Gwinyai H. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology* (1985; xiv-146 pp.; \$ 9.95). Muzorewa joins Black African authors such as John Pobee (*Toward an African Theology*, 1979) and Kwesi A. Dickson (*Theology in Africa*, Orbis 1984) in reflecting on what the inculturation of the faith means and should mean in Africa. In Part I he discusses the "sources" of African theology: African traditional religion, missionary Christianity, the

African Independent Church movement, African nationalism, and the formal inauguration of the All Africa Conference of Churches in 1963. I suggest, however, that it confuses the issue to lump all these together as "sources". Part II of the book consists of three chapters: on the theology of African traditional religion (where the "sources" are identified as prayers, proverbs, myths and the African experience); African theology ("sources": African traditional religion; the Bible; independent churches; and the Christian tradition); and lastly on Black theology in South Africa. All in all, this is an interesting contribution from a promising young African theologian. However, the last three chapters—the ones in which he sets out to make his real contribution—remain too general to break any new ground. What is more, Muzorewa has limited his field of study almost exclusively to Anglophone Protestant Africa.

What the student of African theology may encounter if he also turns to Francophone Roman Catholic Africa, is ably illustrated by the Camerounian F. Eboussi Boulaga in his book *Christianity without Fetishes*, the sub-title of which is "An African critique and recapture of Christianity" (1984) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) 117]. Eboussi is not just *studying* African theology, he is *doing* it. His arguments are not always easy to follow, perhaps because he moves back and forth between theological and philosophical categories. He struggles, *inter alia*, with the question whether dogmas acculturated in the West can remain the same when Christianity is transplanted elsewhere. He addresses, in other words, the issue of *inculturation*, but at a much more profound level than this is customarily done.

Eboussi's book is subdivided into three parts. In Part I he expounds the logic of the discourse and practice of Christianity as a *dominant* religion, with the effects these produce. Missionaries from the West may find this part particularly painful reading, since it describes the missionary outreach in Africa as a process of imposition, domination and alienation. The Christianity that resulted from this outreach is seen as a fetish manufactured in the West. The indictment is, however, not for indictment's sake. It is presented here in order to clear the way for an authentic African response to the message of Christ. This is what Part II, in particular, sets out to do. It is, in effect, a hermeneutical exercise; it aims at spelling out the "Christic model" as an alternative to Africa's inherited Christianity. Eboussi attempts to discover Jesus before Christianity, "upstream, as it were, from where dogmas begin" (p. 85). What Jesus did for his tradition each of us must do, from wherever we are, for our own tradition. Like the Latin American theologians we have discussed above, Eboussi's primary interest is in the earthly Jesus rather than the exalted Christ; his concern is, however, with categories of inculturation rather than liberation. This leads us to the book's third and final part which bears the caption, "The margin of credibility". In this section he does not explicitly address the dilemma of the African church (except in the last chapter ("Sketches for a plan of action")), but, rather, tries to indicate what role religion is to play in the modern world where any pretensions to monopoly are unacceptable. After all, civil society "imposes on religion... a pluralism of convictions and 'gods' and the non-heroic commitment of compromise that rests content with provisional, penultimate solutions, but solutions that provide for the survival and tranquility of the greatest possible number" (p. 164). This is the challenge also to the Christian faith.

The author of our next book, *Non-Bourgeois Theology: An African*

*experience of Jesus* (1985; viii-200 pp.; \$ 10.95), is Joseph G. Donders, a Dutch priest who taught at the University of Nairobi from 1970 to 1984 and is now director of the African Faith and Justice Network of the U.S. Catholic Mission Association in Washington, D.C. Readers of *Missionalia* have in our review section, come to know him as the author of, *inter alia*, *The Peace of Jesus: Reflection on the Gospels for the A. Cycle* [VIDYAJYOTI (1984) 268; B. Cycle 1986, 286; C. Cycle 1984, 268]. Previous books by him include *Jesus, the Stranger*, *The Jesus Option*, [VIDYAJYOTI (1984) 268] and *The Jesus Community*, all of these reflections and meditations on the gospels written from the African perspective. In essence, Donders deals with the same subject matter as Eboussi, but his book is far more readable than Eboussi's. Using an easy style of writing and interspersing his theological discourse with numerous anecdotes and stories, he introduces his arguments in an almost playful manner. Like Eboussi, he is unhappy with the kind of Christianity introduced into Africa by Western missionaries, but he is less severe in his criticism, though he never offers excuses. Rather, he seems to suggest that bygones be bygones, that we learn from past mistakes, and adopt a new approach. In the course of his book he introduces us to the views of sympathetic Western missionaries with a life-time of experience in Africa—people like Edwin Smith, Placide Tempels, Malcolm McVeigh and Aylward Shorter—but also to the contributions of Africans like Samuel Kibicho, Harry Sawyert, John Mbiti, Gabriel Setiloane and John Pobee. In listening to these and other voices and even more particularly, by listening to ordinary Africans, we shall be probing forward towards a truly non-bourgeois theology, a theology of the people and of humankind—a concern which, again, largely coincides with that of Eboussi.

### Asia

Only two books from Asia are included in this review. The first is *Minjung Theology*, subtitled "People as the subject of history", and edited by Kim Yong-Bock (1983; xx-200 pp.; \$ 9.95). It is the product of a theological consultation held in 1979 and organised by the Theological Commission of the National Council of Churches in Korea. The theme of the consultation was "The people of God and the mission of the church."

Apart from Jesus H. Cone and D. Preman Niles—who respectively wrote the "Preface" and the "Introduction"—all contributions to this volume are by Koreans. The roots of minjung theology stretch far back, but as a specific way of doing theology it has emerged only in the 1970s. Its contextual background is the centuries-long enslavement of and discrimination against Koreans in Japan and, more recently, the repression Koreans have experienced at the hands of the Park Chunghee regime in South Korea.

Minjung theology has similarities with Black theology and liberation theology on the one hand, and with African theology on the other. It is both a politi-

cal theology and a theology of culture. It rejects the Marxist notion of class. It is therefore, not a theology of the proletariat but of the people, in spite of the fact that, to Western ears, one of the current definitions of the minjung may sound Marxist: "(T)he minjung are those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated sociologically, and kept uneducated in cultural and intellectual matters" (quoted on p. xvii). Exponents of minjung theology point out, however, that their version of contextual theology should not be universalised in, e.g. Marxist terms; it is a theology of Korea for Korea, although it is also more than that and as such connected to the universal church.

I have kept the best for last. I realise that this is a very subjective statement, probably revealing my own bias more than anything else. And yet, I venture to make such a statement! The book I am referring to is Kosuke Koyama's *Mount Fuji and Mount Sinai—A critique of idols* (1985; x-278 pp.; \$ 12.95—also published by SCM Press in London). Having read his *Water-Buffalo Theology, Three Mile an Hour God* and the (for me) inimitable *No Handle on the Cross* (all of them published by Orbis), I had a fair idea what to expect: a penetrating book on the theme that one of the fundamental functions of theology is to expose idolatry.

His book has twenty chapters, grouped into four parts, each assigned a biblical theme. The central theme, however, is what he describes as the relationship between Mount Fuji (Japanese folk religion and, in addition, Buddhism and all the religions of Asia) on the one hand, and Mount Sinai with Mount Calvary, on the other. Koyama is not simply saying that Mount Sinai is better than or superior to Mount Fuji; he has already rejected, in one of his earlier books, the practice of a "divine beauty contest" in which one compares the best in one's own religion with the worst in the opponent's. Still, there are fundamental differences: Mount Fuji is cosmological, oriented toward nature, a place to which people ascend to do their own spiritual exercise; Mount Sinai is eschatological, oriented toward history, a place to which God descends, in fire (pp. 10, 12). There is, in Japan, a Mount Fuji Devotional Association (Fuji-Ko); a Sinai-Ko is, however, an impossibility (pp. 84-7).

This central theme is pursued in numerous imaginative ways, throughout the book, reaching its most profound level in the last chapter, "Theology of the Cross". It is the "broken Christ" who heals the broken world. This means, *inter alia*, that a "Christian superiority complex" over people of other faiths is categorically excluded. In the light of the Cross the Christian becomes self-critical, and only *then* critical of others; we judge ourselves before we judge others (p. 245). The same applies to differences between Christians; "Conflicts among theologies must be examined in the light of what happened in the night in which Jesus was betrayed" (p. 244). Jesus, the "unemployed God", went to the periphery; at the centre, where "people are nicely salaried and caloried" (p. 251), theology tends to become ideology. The criterion theology of the Cross proposes, however, "is given us in the mocking words, the 'He saved others; he cannot save himself.' This 'Christ who saved others did not save himself' reveals the fundamental character of the true God. False gods save themselves; they do not save others" (p. 260).

I am really tempted to give my readers quote after quote from this remarkable book, but I resist doing so. I'll simply say: *Tolle*

*lege!* This is theology at its best; orthodox theology, and yet astoundingly progressive; liberation theology, but at the same time post-liberation theology in the true sense of the word.

### ORBIS'S "PONTIFICAL" ROLE

The twenty short reviews above should give readers of *Missionalia* a fair idea of the thrust and special contribution of ORBIS BOOKS. Other 1985 titles include Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name?* A critical survey of Christian attitudes toward the world religions (\$ 14.95), [VIDYAJYOTI 1985] 466-69]; Antony Fernando with Leonard Swidler, *Buddhism Made Plain: An introduction for Christians and Jews* (\$ 9.95) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) 223-24]; Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (\$ 8.95), [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) 115]; Kenneth Cragg, *Call of the Minaret* (\$ 13.95) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986) 110] (this is a revised and enlarged edition of Cragg's 1956 classic); Sharon D. Welch, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity: A feminist theology of liberation* (\$ 7.95); Guillermo Cook, *The Expectation of the Poor: Latin American base ecclesial communities in Protestant perspective* (\$ 13.95—this is perceptive and incisive study by a North American evangelical with a lifelong involvement in Latin America); Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation* (\$ 10.95); Ruben Alves, *Protestantism and Repression: A Brazilian case study* (\$ 11.95); Rene Coste, *Marxist Analysis and Christian Faith* (\$ 11.95); Theo Witvliet, *A Place in the Sun: Liberation theology in the Third World* (\$ 8.95) [VIDYAJYOTI (1986)]; Aylward Shorter, *Jesus and the Witch-Doctor: An approach to healing and wholeness* (\$ 10.95), and several others. In the short span of fifteen years ORBIS BOOKS has grown from obscure beginnings to the point where it has some 250 titles in print and is publishing approximately forty new titles annually.

In the year 1900, 77 percent of the Roman Catholic population was found in Europe and North America and only 23 percent in the Third World. By the year 2000 only some 30 percent of Catholic membership will be found in the North Atlantic nations, compared to about 70 percent in the Third World. It is this momentous shift in the church to which ORBIS has been giving voice and that it has been chronicling because, sad to say, in spite of the fact that there are today more Christians in the Third World than in the First, those Christians have not yet really been heard. As a matter of fact, they have only now, since about twenty years, begun to articulate their faith in terms which the Western church can understand—if it cares to listen. And if the church in the West does indeed listen, this will be due, in no small measure, to ORBIS BOOKS. To mediate between First World and Third World churches is the burden and challenge ORBIS has decided to take up. In the words of its new editor-in-chief, John Eagleson, ORBIS will go on striving to be truly "pontifical" in the etymological sense of building bridges among churches and peoples, but particularly between the North Atlantic churches and the church in the two-thirds world.

# Book Notices

**The World of St John. The Gospel and the Epistles.** By E. Earle ELLIS. *Exeter Paternoster Press; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1984.* Pp 96. £ 4.95.

This small book (18 x 12) was first published in 1965 and is republished with minor revisions. It is an introduction to John covering the usual areas of an introduction. Included also is an exposition of the Gospel (pp. 58-83) and the Epistles (pp. 84-10) and some reflections on the meaning of John's writing today. The book is non-technical and contains the normal and commonly accepted ideas about the writings. The exposition is too brief to clarify difficult points in the text. The introductory information is sound and yet would be found in more detail in commentaries which give greater space to the actual text.

P.M. MEAGHEE

**Christo-Psychology.** By Morton T. KELSEY. *London, DLT, 1982.* Pp. xii-154 £ 5.95.

Christo-Psychology is an in-depth exploration of the relationship between the thinking of Carl Jung and the Christian view of spiritual growth and maturity. The author is deeply convinced that Jung's psychology provides the modern materialistic world with a language for human development that integrates Christian spirituality and psychology. The readers who are familiar with Jung's theories of dreams and archetypes will find this book very interesting.

**A Commentary on St. Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits.** By JULES J. TONER, S.J. *Anand, India, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1982.* Pp. xx-336. Rs 35 \$ 10.

There is a growing interest within the Catholic Church for the last two decades in understanding the dynamics of Discernment of Spirits. A lot is being written on this topic but the present work offers a valuable scientific tool to delve deep into the most intricate movements of one's inner life as intended by St Ignatius of Loyola, the author of the Rules for Discernment of Spirits in the *Spiritual Exercises*. The present treatise will be appreciated by "directors of retreats, retreatants, spiritual counsellors, students of spiritual theology and others interested in pursuing the spiritual life" (Editor's *Forward*). Readers who have no training in philosophy might find the analysis quite heavy at times.

**Happiness. Issues of Emotional Living in an Age of Stress for Clergy and Religious.** Ed. Thomas A. KANE. *Massachusetts, Affirmation Books, 1982.* Pp. 127 \$ 5.00. Available from ATC, Bangalore.

Happiness was the theme of the Seventh Psychotheological Symposium conducted by the Affirmation House. The book contains 8 papers presented by the staff of Affirmation House during the Symposium. The authors highlight the simple truths about happiness that have been made complex by sophisticated modern man. The human issues on which the authors make their personal reflections are viewed holistically, supported by insights taken from writings in psychology, theology and Scripture. A book like this might vibrate well with priests and religious living in an urban industrialised society.

**The Life of St Francis of Assisi.** By E.E. REYNOLDS. *Wheat Ramestead, Anthon: Clarke Books, Pp. 128. £ 2.25.*

Reynolds, the author of this book, is renowned for his many historical biographies and the present one is the last of the series, published posthumously. The prologue, *The two Tramps*, briefly recounts the author's own mystical experience at the very tomb of *Il Poverello*. The thirteen small chapters are replete with profound insights into the person who dared to be simple by walking alone.

(Continued on page 452)

# Forum

## 1. The "Stupidity" of the Christian Religion

Let no one get upset by the title of this rejoinder. I have only praises for Dr Pushparajan's study of the Pope's visit from the point of view of inter-religious dialogue, and for his objective, balanced and intelligent remarks. My only concern is with the terrible accusation thrown to the face of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, not a very complimentary one, of "ambivalence" and "intolerance." Dr Pushparajan seems to hide his views and to expose the views of his Hindu friends or colleagues. But since their views are never rejected, I presume that he quotes them as a polite way of expressing his own.

Dr Pushparajan does not use the ugly word of "intolerance," but uses a some what equivalent expression, perhaps even uglier: "If the Church cannot accept other religions in India as equal, if not superior, to Christianity, then the positive attitude of the Church towards non-Christian religions is bound to be suspect." Of what it is bound to be suspect, Dr Pushparajan does not specify, unless he, too, shares in the view of his friends who are afraid of "conversion and conquest."

Dr Pushparajan seems to agree with those who say, or seem to say, that the power and prestige that the Church has enjoyed for a number of centuries is due to the political powers of the past. Let me add that the Church, not some members of the Church, but the Church in its authentic teaching and guidance, has always deprecated the use of power and violence, since the time when the power of evil suggested to the Founder of Christianity, "Make these stones be converted into loaves of bread; worship me and I will give you power over all the kingdoms of the earth." Now, Dr Pushparajan continues, since the Church does not wield power any more, she has been forced to enter into dialogue with other religions. I ask first, what for? To regain that power?

Dr Pushparajan ends his remarks with the concluding paragraph: "The Church must come out with an open acknowledgment of, and authoritative declaration on the fundamental equality of all religions." Is this possible? Is the only reason for not doing so that the Christian Church claims superiority? I am rather of the opinion that religions cannot be superior or inferior, as much as sciences or arts are not one superior to the other, or inferior to any. Which is superior



architecture or music? Mathematics or biology? Such language is nonsense. A religion is a religion or it is not. Religions are ways to God, and meant to establish among human beings the right relation to God. Either they do this or they are not religions.

Dr Pushparajan refers himself to a previous writing of his in the *Journal of Dharma* where he states that the equality of all religions can be indicated in three ways: all can produce and have actually produced "saints"; truth (I guess Dr Pushparajan does not mean the full truth) can be found in them; and, every religion has the necessity and ability to "grow" constantly from untruth to truth. Right. In other words, all religions are religions. This seems to be the truism implied in those three marks. These three characteristics are to be found in every religion, because religion is meant to do these three things.

I personally believe that the aphorism "all comparisons are odious" applies more forcefully to the case of religions than to any other case. I, though not holding any degree in comparative religion, prefer to uphold the "incomparability and incomparableness" of all religions. Will the Hindu friends of Dr Pushparajan happily accept the "equality" of Hinduism and Fetichism (the religion of many tribals in Brasil and other countries of South America)? For *them*, fetichism is their religion. Will not Hindus be rather insulted by this comparison of "equality"?

It is precisely the difference in each religion (if there would not be differences there would not be religions but only one religion) that in practice alienate the followers of one religion from the followers of another. In a supermarket there is an infinite number of articles. All, in their manifold variety, meet some need or other of craving human beings. So it is with religions. We should rather speak of the complementarity of all religions. This is what the Pope clearly stated when he said that, "he had come to India to learn," not to compare, not to impose any article in the supermarket of religions on any unwilling buyer. Of course, as a religious leader, interested mostly in religion, he meant that he had come to learn religion, in particular from Hinduism, the largest religion in India. That is why he quoted Hindu religious leaders, mostly.

Therefore let us not insist on the fundamental equality of all goods in the supermarket—all satisfy a human need—but let us extol the variety and complementarity, of all goods, and of all religions.

Now I wish to stress one aspect of the truth that seems to be absent throughout the arguments of Dr Pushparajan and which I consider very fundamental to our exchange of views. The Pope, any Pope, is not the Supreme Being in the Catholic Christian Church. Fallible in most things, he is infallible in a few only on account of God's assurance of guidance and help in those few things. I believe that it is in those few things where the "stupidity" of the Christian religion appears mostly. They appear, and they are, and they ought to be, "stupidity" to ordinary human beings.

God, if he is God, can think, plan, do things unlike men. Many of these things, which are embodied in the different religions, may and ought to appear to ordinary men as stupidity. So, there came St Paul, the greatest exponent of the Christian religion, and not the inventor or corrupter of Christianity, as some would like us to believe, telling Christians that our religion is "folly" (a stronger word, I suppose, than "stupidity"); what is folly, he says, is the mystery of the Cross. Yes, this is one among many other follies in the Christian religion. Yet that very folly Paul calls the wisdom of God, that folly which is wiser than human wisdom.

So when Dr Pushparajan (or his friends for that matter) see changes of policy from display of power to begging for acceptance and pity, as if the Church, like an old woman, is becoming lonely and isolated, he ought to think that the history of all religions is full of such follies. The Christian Church, as any other religion, contains in her boundaries weak and sinful men and women who instead of the folly of God, wiser than human wisdom, prefer their own folly, and of these follies there is no end. In spite of all this, the Catholic Church comes up for dialogue, not to compromise, or to acquire power, but confident of its own survival because its Founder has said, "I am with you always till the end of time." This belief, this hope, unshakable in the presence of persecutions, of death, lions, fire, prisons, terrorism, is part and parcel of the "stupidity", the great stupidity, indeed, in the eyes and judgment of mere men.

The essay of such a qualified and intelligent person as Dr Pushparajan appears in his writing, has made more clear to my eyes that about Religion and religions we must be very cautious, for we are treading on holy ground, and so man in these matters, is not, cannot be, must not be, a judge sitting at his tribunal, but a seeker, honest and sincere, falling on his knees, making a profound "sashtang-pranam" in order to listen to the TRUTH AND FOOLISHNESS of God. Then only he can begin a meaningful dialogue. I am certain that John Paul II has done so, for he did succeed in conveying the impression of "stupidity" that marks the religion he so authoritatively and worthily represents.

Before I end my article, I should like to point out the correct meaning of many expressions which are misinterpreted in the mind of Dr Pushparajan or of his Hindu friends.

1. It seems that the Christian religion has to be inferior to Hinduism, for "it is recent and of alien origin". Is this God's verdict or a man-made law? I strongly believe that only God can make and destroy religions, and no one can put conditions and limits to God's power and wisdom.

Dr Pushparajan says that Hindus are terrified when they hear that the best in Hinduism is "a preparation for the Gospel" (that is Christianity). That idea that goes back to St Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in the second century A.D., means that Christianity is explained and

understood in terms of other religions, and that other religions can come to the knowledge of their own fullness, when they look at themselves side by side with Christianity. In other words, and in our case, it is not that Hinduism at any time will become Christianity, but that Christianity will become "Hinduism" (not "be Hinduized"), if the words of Irenaeus are properly understood.

2. "Seeds of the Word" an expression of Origin and other Greek Fathers of the Church. If it means anything, it is the very thing that Dr Pushparajan is claiming, i.e., the equality of all religions, in the only possible and appropriate manner that can be stated.

3. Dr Pushparajan gets scandalized when it is said that those religious truths and acceptable ideas in Hinduism are "gifts properly belonging to the Church." I have not the original words, probably spoken or written in Latin: "properly belonging" does not mean "exclusively" belonging as the writer seems to understand, but should be taken as meaning "fittingly" belonging to the Church also, and so offering common ground for a constructive and meaningful dialogue.

I thank Dr Pushparajan for his enlightening essay, which I am convinced, should be like a blue-print for further dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity. I wish that the leaders of the Christian churches in India take it for that very purpose. It would be very much to the liking and satisfaction of John Paul II, indeed the continuation of the dialogue begun by him in his memorable visit to India.

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## 2. Further Reflections on the Pope's Visit from the Point of View of Inter-Religious Dialogue

The article by Dr A. Pushparajan in the April issue of VIDYAJYOTI on the Pope's visit and inter-religious dialogue raised a number of interesting and important points which call for deeper study, not least by those of us who are living in constant interaction with members of other religious groups. One such growing-point for reflection is his observation that Pope John Paul, "in spite of his great openness to other religions, does not seem to have taken any step further than that of Vatican II and has not resolved the ambivalent attitude of the Council towards other religions" (p. 197). Without necessarily disagreeing with this statement, I would like to comment briefly upon it in relation to the respective roles of the Holy Father and the local Church in this whole area of inter-faith dialogue.

Dr Pushparajan feels the urgent need for "an authoritative declaration on the part of the Church on the fundamental equality of all

religions" which "alone will place her dialogal venture above suspicion." While deeply sympathizing with the desire for some such statement, perhaps more along the lines of Father M. Amaladoss's excellent paper "Dialogue and Mission" in the February 1986 issue of VIDYAJYOTI, I am not at all sure that it would be realistic, pastorally prudent or even theologically defensible to expect the Pope or the centralized magisterium of the Church to come out with such a pronouncement at this moment in history.

It seems unrealistic, because it is highly improbable that either Pope John Paul or the Roman bureaucracy are psychologically capable of making such a statement at present. As Dr Pushparajan well notes, those who have been engaged in the sharing of life and faith with members of other religious traditions over a long period of time frequently reach a stage of mutual understanding and deep communion of mind and heart ("contuition") which transcends without annulling all differences of creed and practice. But for those who have not gone through such an apprenticeship, it seems too much to expect a sudden change from the cautious, not to say suspicious, attitudes of the past to an openness which could all too easily look like a complete reversal of all claims hitherto made by the Church regarding the person of Christ and his universal mission. I think it is safe to say that almost everyone who has been brought face to face with the genuine spiritual depths of another religion, and no longer feels his faith in Christ radically threatened by this experience, has reached this point only by passing through a dark night of the spirit which is normally the result of close personal contacts not usually accessible outside the socio-cultural context of the religion in question. It would, I think, have been altogether too much to hope that Pope John Paul's experience before he came to India—even allowing for the thorough preparation he undertook in the form of study of Gandhiji and Tagore, and briefing by experts in Indian philosophy and religion—had prepared him to make any such statement. And although it seemed at the time of his visit that the living faith of many Hindus and others whom he met in India had made an almost overwhelming impression on him, we have apparently to accept the sad and barely credible fact that his recent encyclical "Dominum et Vivificantem" on the Holy Spirit, dated Pentecost Sunday, May 18th, 1986, makes no explicit mention of presence and action of the Spirit in the great non-biblical religious traditions of mankind.

Even if the making of such a statement were psychologically possible for the Pope himself, it seems only too clear that the vast majority of the faithful, even—and perhaps especially—in India, are quite unprepared to receive any such document with equanimity, let alone enthusiasm. We have only to think of the reception accorded to attempts made in the not-too-distant past to "Indianize", "indigenize" or "inculturate" various aspects of Christians life and worship to realize this. Admittedly—but this is precisely my point here—much of the opposition was due to lack of previous preparation, and there is now a small but steadily growing minority within the Church

who are increasingly in favour of this whole movement, recognizing that the Word who was made flesh and became through his Spirit the life-principle of the Church is also the Word who illumines all men and is the source of all truth, religious or secular, and is therefore at home in all cultures. Nevertheless one cannot, I think, escape the conclusion that an official proclamation from the Pope of the kind we are envisaging here would, at this stage in the development of the Church, be pastorally very imprudent.

Moreover—and this is to me the heart of the matter—to demand such an a priori declaration from the Holy Father at this time would be to call in question some of the deepest theological insights of recent years into both the process by which the Church grows in the understanding of her own nature and mission, and the specific role of the local Church *vis-a-vis* the Church universal.

Thanks in large measure, though not exclusively, to some of the pioneering liberation theologians, we are now much more keenly aware than we were not so long ago of the profound interdependence between experience, theological reflection and praxis. The rediscovery of the authentic insights of Ignatius of Loyola into the nature of discernment and the contemporary experience of the Church at large have also contributed to this evolution, so that it is more and more widely accepted today that, as Vatican II made abundantly clear in the Constitution on Divine Revelation (no. 8), the whole Church is potentially involved in the process of the Church's growth in understanding herself and her relationship to the human race in all its splendid diversity. Therefore prolonged reflection by "ordinary" Christians on their own life and experience, under the action of the Spirit in the light of the Gospel and of the insights of earlier generations, should normally precede any authoritative pronouncement made by the Church as a whole through its official representatives. As the English (or Irish?) moral theologian, Fr Kevin Kelly, observes in a different context,

This is not to deny that within the Church the Pope, as supreme teacher, does not need the permission of the Church before he articulates its faith. However, it does mean that *his articulation is binding because it is the faith of the Church that it articulates*.<sup>1</sup>

The same point is made at greater length and without the complication of double negatives by Karl Rahner in his "Dream of the Church of the Future."<sup>2</sup> The reception by the Church of the papal "articulation" is far more likely to be prompt and positive if this preliminary spadework has been done.

In the specific context of the faith of the Church universal "seeking understanding" or the presence and action of the Spirit in other religions—or, to put it differently, of the role of the person and

1. *The Tablet*, 14.6.1986, p. 169. Italics mine.

2. *Theological Investigations*, XX.

mission of Christ in the salvation of followers of other traditions—it is clear that local Church communities which have a continual interaction with men, women and children of other faiths have a unique responsibility which cannot be taken from them or abdicated by them. It is only by entering deeply with sympathy and understanding into the faith-experience of our Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Jain, animist, agnostic or even atheist friends that Christians can hope to touch and be touched by the presence of the "Lord and Giver of Life" in them and by the echoes this presence and action awakens in themselves. As more and more Christians have his experience, prayerfully reflect on it and share it with each other, and so feed it back into the larger Christian community, the slow work of transformation of attitudes will gradually spread throughout the Churches until the old negative and exclusive attitudes drop away of themselves because they have become intolerable to us. Then we shall be ready for a statement . . .

It seems to me, then, that the Holy Father put responsibility for inter-religious dialogue and the growth of the Church in this dimension of her life fairly and squarely where it belongs when he said to our bishops in Delhi:

As ministers of the Gospel here in India, you have the task of expressing the Church's respect and esteem for all your brethren and for the spiritual, moral and cultural values enshrined in their different religious traditions. In doing so, you have to bear witness to your own convictions of faith, and offer the Gospel of Christ's love and peace and its spirit of service to the consideration of all those who freely wish to reflect on it, just as you yourselves freely reflect on the values of other religious traditions. In this inter-religious dialogue, which of its nature involves collaboration, *the supreme criterion is charity and truth*. You yourselves will always bear in mind the exhortation of Saint Paul: "Speaking the truth in love we are to grow in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15).

Your pastoral efforts to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ must include "a clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all people as a gift of God's grace and mercy" (*Evangelium Nuntiandi*, 27). This must be done with due regard for the great challenge of "inculturation." (Stress in the original.)

It must, however, be admitted that while he clearly indicates this as a task for the local Church, in which the bishops and clergy have a specific responsibility, he envisages it in terms of the simple "translating of the treasure of the faith, in the originality of its content, into the legitimate variety of expressions of all peoples of the world . . . without 'the slightest betrayal of its essential truth' (*Evangelium Nuntiandi*, 63)," and appears to have no conception of the Copernican revolution in thought-patterns and mental habits that is involved for a normal Christian in the encounter of the Gospel with, for example, the non-dualist tradition of Hinduism or the non-theistic religion of Buddhism. It seems doubtful if even many of our own bishops have any such realization, given their usual socio-cultural background and the limitations imposed on them by their official functions.

The conclusion seems starkly obvious: if all members of the local Christian community, laity very much included, have to admit that "we are the Church", not just comfortably and anonymously universal, but uncomfortably and concretely individual, and "we are the 'believers'" (of *Dei Verbum* no. 8) whose reflection on their own intimate experience of the things of God is meant to be a source for the Church's growth in understanding her nature and mission and the treasures of faith handed down by the apostles, it seems that we have to turn to and do something about it. Most of us have at least some contacts with people of other faiths in the normal process of daily living: we might begin by reflecting on these relationships in the light of the Gospel, and seeing where that leads us. Readers of VIDYAJYOTI might also profitably undertake a reflective study of Fr Amalados's article on "Dialogue and Mission" already referred to, and share it with friends who would appreciate it. Above all, perhaps we should each of us personally implore the Spirit who is in travail in the whole creation to show us what to do here and how, and give us the courage to do it. Popes and bishops have enough specific responsibilities of their own to answer for before God and men without our attempting to off-load ours onto them also: if change is to come in the Church, it must begin at least sometimes with us, and especially so, it would seem, for reasons already given, in this whole area of inter-religious dialogue.

Fundamentally, of course, we all share the same responsibility in different ways, and so a final practical suggestion for joint action of laity and clergy of the local Church may not be out of place: could not all of us, clergy or laity, who feel we have actually touched the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, "Lord and Giver of Life", in the other great spiritual traditions of India through our personal experience of their scriptures and other sources of inspiration and our contacts with men and women of those traditions who are clearly "led by the Spirit" and bear in their lives the fruits of the same Spirit ("charity, joy, peace, patience . . ."), request our bishops to draw the attention of the Holy Father to this fact, and express to him our regret that this was not done in time for this contribution of the local Church to be reflected in his recent encyclical? I, for one, would like to make that request here, hoping that it will not prove to be "one only, without a second"!

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# Book Reviews

## Christian Ethics

**Moral and Pastoral Questions.** By George V. Lobo. *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1985. Pp. ix-320. Sewn paperback Rs. 35, \$ 6.50. Cloth Bound: Rs. 40, \$ 8 50.

In this volume Fr George Lobo presents a selection of his articles published in different theological journals and collections. They deal with basic issues in moral theology and many questions of great pastoral relevance. Fr Lobo is one of the few moral theologians who have pioneered a sane and balanced renewal in moral theology in India and Asia according to the spirit and insights of Vatican II. The articles collected here bear abundant testimony to it. They serve as convenient and helpful references. Being a perceptive writer, Fr Lobo responds to issues in Third World situations. This is found specially in his articles in the section on justice, marriage, and sexuality.

Since most of the readers may be familiar with the content of the articles, I do not want to summarise the thoughts and insights of the author. The articles, updated, are lucid in style and pointed in their pastoral application and relevance, and embody a mature reflection on the diverse pastoral questions and moral issues. The volume will certainly help students of theology, pastors, religious and laity in updating their thinking in the areas of moral and pastoral theology and the book also offers valuable guidance to teachers for the formation of the moral conscience and a sense of justice. The book is well published and offered at a moderate price for which we congratulate Gujarat Sahitya Prakash.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

**Religion and Social Conflicts.** By Otto MADURO. *New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1982. Pp. xxiii-161. Price \$ 8.95.

While Marx called religion the 'opium of the people', today international capitalist interest view some of its manifestations as 'subversive'. Indeed religion can be incorporated into the hege-

monic strategy of dominant classes or it can be a potentially revolutionary force. In this important essay on the sociology of religion, the author investigates with remarkable depth and clarity, the conditions under which religion can perform a particular social function. His starting-point is his deep anguish that the majority of people in the apparently Christian societies of Latin America are subjected to regimes organized to fatten the bank accounts of local and foreign minorities. He asks how and why this situation has come about? What changes are possible in this situation? How can these changes be actually brought about? If the last question is not fully answered, the author admits that it is due to the intrinsically unfinished nature of his work which could find no satisfactory conclusion at the theoretical level, but could be answered only by moving forward to deeds. In the meanwhile, his work casts considerable light on the direction for further fruitful research and work.

Any sociology of religion is likely to be influenced by the perspectives and values of the researcher. Maduro, however, proposes one that will be: (1) conscious of its partiality; (2) autocritical. He maintains this autocritical stance in his partiality with the struggles of Latin America's oppressed sectors for their self-liberation.

In Part II, he explains very well how far religion is a product of social conflicts, using the approach of Marx, but avoiding his excesses. Instead of vague generalizations, he distinguishes carefully between societies conditioned by communitarian or by asymmetric modes of production, as well as the different historical periods.

In Part III, he studies religion as a relatively autonomous terrain of social conflicts between the clergy and the laity, and between different groups of the clergy. They arise from the unequal distribution of the "product" of religious work, "texts, verbal formulas, perceptible and patterned conduct, an institutionalized use of space and time, and so on" (p. 83). If he were to make the study in India, he would more explicitly



have added positions of power and benefits of welfare schemes.

While all this casts a lot of light on the internal functioning of the Church, the last Part on *Religion as an Active Factor in Social Conflicts* is the most important from the liberation point of view. The author uncovers with great perspicacity the ways in which dominant classes strive to make religion a means of reinforcing their domination. However, religion can also function as a factor in furthering social change. This requires that the dominated classes develop an innovative and autonomous world-view in relation to that of the dominant classes.

The author would have liked also to suggest how to move from theory to practice, both in the area of scientific research and in that of socio-political intervention. But this he feels cannot be determined a priori. "You prove you can move by moving." So the work is to be taken as a stimulus for all interested in liberation of their sisters and brothers to move forward. Among other merits it is a model of using Marxist analysis in a free and constructive way.

G. LOBO, S.J.

**The Changing Continuity of Christian Ethics.** Vol. 2: The Insights of History. By R.E.O. WHITE, Exeter, The Paternoster Press, 1981. Pp. 442, \$ 8.60.

Having in a previous volume examined biblical ethics, in this volume R.E.O. White goes into the complex history of Christian ethics from the time after the N.T. period up to the contemporary scene. The question that confronts Christian ethics is, "How is it possible to change, so continuing to be relevant, while remaining the same, so continuing to be Christian?" (p. 9).

One might think histories of Christian ethics are no more necessary and out of fashion, since each generation must do its own work of moralising in the changing situations of society and culture. One may wonder how far precedents, rules, customs, traditions, inherited insights, are relevant to new moral issues in a rapidly changing world. One may fear also what history might reveal: that the Church has been wrong in many cases, divided, or compromised, and is thus deprived of authority to teach the present generation. Some might think that the best course open to us lies in a direct

return to the Bible.

Yet such an approach is not adequate for Scripture does not have a moral *paradosis* about such modern issues as nuclear energy and warfare, test-tube babies, genetic engineering . . . Scripture, at best, will offer only indirect guidance. We believe in the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit leading the believers of each generation into truth.

Modern Christians must appeal both to Scripture and to history when they undertake an ethical reflection. In this process, the accumulated wisdom and insights coming from the long tradition of the Christian community cannot be ignored. White shows in this work that history sheds more light than shade. The history of Christian ethics shows that ethics interweaves with theology and religious experience and that precepts, incentives and resources are never separated. History also reveals the objectivity of the moral law whether it is expressed in terms of divine sovereignty, the Kingdom of God, or in terms of the supreme law of love.

In White's view biblical ethics offers to Christians the challenge and the ideal of the imitation of Christ. This profound and complex ideal has been variously understood throughout the history of Christianity and enriched by the continuing work of the Spirit in the Christian community. The ideal also explains the flexibility, adaptation and the ever-new interpretations in the Church: "Christian ethic is ultimately expressed, not in words, definitions, principles or regulations, but in loyalty to a Person entirely worthy to be trusted, worshipped and obeyed" (p. 11). Because of this, it has been possible to translate the ideal in different lands, times and cultures and to "follow Christ" wherever God has placed Christians. As White remarks, "It is the story of this process, with all its successes and failures, its insights and confusions, its experiments and its conservatism, its few central affirmations and its many disagreements, that makes up the history of Christian ethics" (p. 11). The value of the history of Christian ethics lies in discovering the Christian heritage and in realising what is permanent and what transient in its ongoing formulations and expressions. Such a knowledge is the necessary foundation of a Christian ethical investigation today. In the survey made from the time of the entry of Christians from the Jewish into the gentile context up to the

contemporary period, White outlines the Christian norm: the imitation of Christ, pursued in different ways. Though the survey, especially in the modern period, covers mostly the Protestant churches and thinkers, it is sufficiently ecumenical in other parts of the study. The unchanging continuity of Christian ethics lies in the imitation of Christ in whom God "has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his son" (p. 378). Students of Christian ethics, pastors and teachers will find in the book the inherited insights of the Christian tradition regarding moral life, and light for the great moral issues of today.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

**Ministry by the People.** Theological Education by Extension. Ed. by F. Ross KINSLER. *Maryknoll Orbis Books*, 1983. xvi-332. \$ 12.95.

One of the perennial problems all the Churches have been facing is the shortage of pastors well trained in theology and pastoral care. Many an attempt has been made in different Churches to meet the rising need for trained pastors. The book, *Ministry by the People* is a survey of the various experiments carried out in this regard in the past two to three decades in various parts of the world.

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) is a movement to offer new possibilities for ministerial formation beyond the "professional" mode of formation. Backed by the major Churches, including the Catholic Church, this is a programme aimed at training 'barefoot' pastors, professionally competent to meet the needs of the local congregations.

Edited by F. Ross Kinsler, Assistant Director, WCC Programme on Theological Education, the book offers a very interesting study and evaluation of a wide variety of over 500 modes of "non-formal" theological educational ventures in Latin America, North America, Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe. Over 100,000 students are presently engaged in this programme. So the book is a repertory of experiences narrated and evaluated by competent people at the frontiers of theological education.

When the formal seminary system is under critical scrutiny, a book of this sort could give the *formatores* alternatives to the traditional schools of theology constructed and transported from

Europe and America. A bibliography at the end suggests materials for further reading.

R. ATHICKAL, S.J.

**The Coming of God.** By Maria BOULDING. London, Collins Fountain Paperbacks, 1984 (first published by SPCK, 1982). Pp. vii-208. £ 2.50.

Reflections upon personal and communitarian experiences, in the light of the Bible, are the main contents of this book by a modern contemplative. The central theme of the book is the pattern of the divine self-giving. God's self-gift reaches all men and women at all times, in all the spheres of life, but three are highlighted as significant, namely, the history of Israel, the personal experiences in one's life-struggle and, above all, the liturgy. The title of the book is indicative of the prominence given to the presence and action of God in human affairs.

Familiarity with the Bible and insightful reflections upon personal and communitarian experiences in the light of the Bible, mark the presentation. These reflections do have a theological depth, though, mercifully, this is not systematised and elaborated. The close link between the history of Israel and everyone's personal history is highlighted. The contrast between Israel's experience of the fidelity and goodness of God and its infidelity is a recurring theme. There is also a close link between what happens in nature and to each individual. Winter, for instance, and its frozenness, sterility and its apparent death, is the pattern of human experience for millions of people. But these aspects of winter contain a power to bring new life. God's coming is heralded by them. But the ability to listen is required on our part. Our culture is one that makes this a difficult task.

Though apparently an "Advent" reflection, the wide range of thought and sentiments of this book take one beyond the season and make the book a welcome contribution to contemporary spiritual literature.

T.K. JOHN, S.J.

## Religions

**Breakthrough.** Insights of the Great Religious Discoverers. By Clifford G. HOSPITAL. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1985. Pp. xii-191. \$ 9.95.

This is a book on comparative religion. The approach, however, is a very personal one. The author, who is an ordained Methodist minister, focuses on the life stories of the great religious discoverers more than on the historical contexts in which they lived. His reason for doing this is that he wants to highlight the message and the insight that these figures have bequeathed to the religious traditions of the human race. This is what he means by "breakthrough"—that they broke through to new paths in viewing the mystery of life. He attempts to present the life of these discoverers in such a way as to show how the elements of the tradition that developed on the basis of their experience flow from the founders' lives. What he is doing, in other words, is looking at the stories of the lives of the founders of the great religious traditions as *myths*, that mixture of fact and fantasy which human beings make to reveal the meaning of life. In this he uses *myth* as that word is understood by scholars in comparative religion. He realises that the "facts" which are narrated may not be historically accurate, but that does not destroy the value of the myth. It at least gives a clue as to what the life of the founder meant to the followers of the tradition. He seeks what is very important in any dialogue—to understand the other, and that too, as much as possible, from *within* his or her tradition.

The Introduction outlines the approach. It is followed by the treatment, in successive chapters, of the Buddha, Krishna, Master Kung (Confucius) and Master Lao (of Tao fame), Moses and Muhammad, and then Jesus. A final chapter, entitled "Breakthrough to the Global Village," gives the theology that the author draws from his exposition. This he sees as a breakthrough to a *darshan* of mature humanism which opens us actually to learn something from traditions other than the Christian.

The book is written for undergraduates of Western universities. For us in India who are always in the midst of people of different faiths, the book may be a bit elementary. It is still worth looking through, it seems to me, because it gives a good example of an engaging and lively way of presenting the matter. I have the feeling that Hospital's classes are probably interesting and stimulating.

There is another feature of the book that is worth mentioning. The author

also uses his expositions to point to practical life applications for his students. He blends his ministry with his teaching and scholarship.

I think we need books like this in our context of rabid communalism. May God inspire someone to write them, above all, in our Indian languages. One thing that surprised me a bit was to see on p. 154 that the author refers to the Johannine *logos* as a Greek concept. I am under the impression that most Scripture scholars these days would trace the parentage of *logos* in John to the Hebrew *dabar* or the Aramaic *memra*.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**Sufism and Bhakti. Maulana Rum and Sri Ramakrishna.** By I.H. Azad FARUQI. New Delhi, Abhinav Publications, 1984. Pp. viii-178. Rs 80.

The present book, the revised and enlarged version of the author's dissertation for the Master of Literature degree at the Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, sets out to study the experience of Divine Love in the life and teachings of two great and popular saints, Maulana Rum from the Sufi and Sri Ramakrishna from the *Bhakti* tradition. Such a comparative study suggested itself to the author, "since the absorption of one in Divine Love was as complete as that of the other" (p. 124).

In a summary from reliable secondary sources, the first chapter describes the nature and growth of Sufism while the second traces the origin and development of the *Bhakti Marga*. In the third chapter the author presents a biographical outline of the two saints endeavouring "to highlight the changes and revolutions brought about by Divine Love in their lives and thus provides an opportunity to witness its working in two personalities wholly possessed by it but belonging to two completely different milieus and ages" (p. 57). Chapter four studies how the two saints view the "existential situation of man." Both, Rumi and Ramakrishna, are stated to agree that the human situation is marked by a state of suffering caused by the basic estrangement which consists in the fact "that the soul is the true person engaged in the body . . . separated or veiled from its original divine source" (p. 103). Both, also, are stated to agree "that there is a basic desire in every human being to

overcome this estrangement" by becoming "truly God-conscious and united with Him in spirit and thought (*ibid*). The author also finds both, Rumi and Ramakrishna "unanimous in regarding self-consciousness or ego as the basic factor responsible for, and the principal expression of this state of estrangement" (*ibid*).

The two saints' understanding of the nature of *Ishq* and *Bhakti* is treated in the next chapter. The soul, "imprisoned in material forms" desires to be reunited with the whole. The reason for this is that the Ultimate Reality itself is always attracting "its parts, that is human souls" (p. 107). The Ultimate Reality, then, "is the real cause of *Ishq* and *Bhakti* (Divine Love). However, since man's soul, deluded by ignorance, is prone to mistake its constant longing for the original abode as craving for various transitory goals, the special grace of God (*taufiq* in Sufism, *kirpa* in *Bhakti*) is needed to direct it towards its true object, God" (p. 107).

In the final chapter the author points out how both, Maulana Rumi and Sri Ramakrishna, within their respective inherited framework of ascetic-spiritual teaching, understand selfless and passionate love of the Divine. It culminates on the Sufi side in *Ishq*, to the point of annihilation of self, thus transcending the dichotomy of *sahw* (sobriety) and *sukr* (intoxication) and for Ramakrishna in *Bhakti*, more precisely *Prema Bhakti*, which is characterized by "forgetfulness of the external world and forgetfulness of one's own body" (p. 139).

In his conclusion Faruqi stresses that "the sentiment of *Ishq* and *Bhakti* (Divine Love) is a universal phenomenon rooted in the basic nature of man, irrespective of his external affiliation to any particular religio-cultural group, period of history or place of existence" (p. 152). There are differences in the ways of conceiving and the forms of expressing the object of love, and also in the methods recommended to attain the Supreme Beloved. These differences, in fact, "characterize the unique contribution of each tradition to the religious heritage of mankind and distinguish one stage in the course of a tradition from the other. Yet these differences do not touch the substance of religiosity or the inner religious sentiment of man. These

are differences which relate to the external 'forms' . . . but not the universal spirit of religion rooted in the intrinsic nature of man as such" (152-53).

In so far as Faruqi's study wants to show that in the life and teaching of a Muslim and a Hindu saint and mystic the love of God has proved to be the overriding and all-pervasive value, it has been successful. It clarifies the meaning and underscores the value of *Ishq* and *Prema Bhakti* in the overall context of Sufism and the *Bhakti* tradition. One would have liked, however, the author to probe into the distinctive differences in the understanding of the two concepts as well as into their realisation in the life of the two saints. We would have liked to learn how each of the two saints assessed the religious value of the mainstream "orthodox" approach in his respective religion, i.e., in Islam and Hinduism as a whole.

"Divine Love" obviously defies any definition, but a closer inquiry into the very different connotations and ranges of meaning which "Divine Love" can have, would have been helpful. How do *Ishq* and *Prema Bhakti* compare, for instance, to the concepts of *eros* and *agape*, and how do the two saints view the relationship between the loving, self-giving service of God and that of neighbour? How far is the "Divine Love", as expressed in *Ishq* and *Bhakti*, a gift of grace bestowed on the sinner, and how far is it the result of following an innate, natural tendency conceived of in terms of a Platonic or gnostic urge to return to the One and Whole, the Source of all emanation? Such questions do not seem to be out of place. Rather, the broad, if not sweeping, conclusions the author draws from his case study (cf. p. 152, para 2) invite them. Buddhism, c.g., in its mainstream tradition, does not seem to inculcate the love of God as such. Can we then qualify "the sentiment of *Ishq* and *Bhakti* (Divine Love)", without any further distinctions, as "a universal phenomenon"?

With such queries in mind and in spite of shortcomings in style and technical presentation, we recommend Azad Faruqi's study as a valuable contribution to the so badly neglected field of comparative studies in Hinduism and Islam.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

**Religion at the Crossroads.** By Professor Syed VAHIDUDDIN. Delhi: Idarah Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1980. Pp. 48. Rs. 20.

This enlarged version of the first Dr S. Abid Husain Memorial Lecture (1979) reflects on the crisis of Islam and of religion in general. The author, an eminent Indian Muslim philosopher, was initiated into the philosophy of religion by Rudolf Otto in Marburg whose student and guest he was for several years in the early 1930's. His thinking combines in a felicitous way the Indian and Western traditions of philosophising and is coloured by a life-long attachment to Sufi thought and practice. These pages are helpful by the clear distinctions the author makes in discussing religion and related terms. By freeing the genuinely religious element in "religion" from other connotations and levels we attach to it all too easily, Vahiduddin helps to spot the real crisis of religion which tends to remain hidden behind much ado about essentially non-religious issues that parade in a religious garb. There are also beautifully formulated paragraphs on the unity and the simultaneous and necessary diversity of faiths. Vahiduddin's writing betrays many years of attentive and wide reading and of personal meditation on the central reality of the religious dimension of man.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

**Word of God in the Qur'an.** By Thomas J. O'SHAUGHNESSY, S.J. Second, completely revised edition of *The Koranic Concept of the Word of God* (1948). Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1984

[*Biblica et Orientalia*, 11a] Pp. 55. Lit. 13,000; \$ 8.00.

This is a succinctly written, clearly phrased and structured study of the meaning of an important notion of Quranic Christology. It aims at "discovering what the Qur'an wishes its hearers to understand by the term", and avoids the fallacy of seeking "to point out inconsistencies based on the assumption that it intends to use 'word of God' in its Christian sense."

The investigation comes to the conclusion that Jesus in the Qur'an is called a word in the sense of a creative command or, more explicitly a 'thing decreed' by a creative command. "From this it is clear that the title is applied to him in the Qur'an by a denomination purely extrinsic, that is, merely by way of indicating the manner of his temporal origin and with no reference to anything inherent in him. 'Word' expressing a divine activity hypostatized never occurred to the founder of Islam as the sense conveyed in the three Christological texts" (p. 38).

The critical methodology, the objectivity and respect for the Quranic Christological option which this study demonstrates, make it a model of its kind. The author shows impressively how sober scholarship far from militating against, in fact promotes mutual understanding between the two faiths.

Even those libraries that possess the 1948 edition of the work will be well advised to acquire this thoroughly revised edition of the book.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

(Continued from page 438)

the Gospel Path. Throughout the book the reader will be fascinated by interesting anecdotes taken from the life of the Saint. The book contains two appendices, the first includes notes on the Third Order now referred to as The Secular Franciscan Order and the second is a series of Franciscan Meditations compiled by Brother Reginald.

**I, Francis, The Spirit of St Francis of Assisi.** By Carlo CARRETTO. London, William Collins/Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1982. Pp. 165/125. £ 3.95/\$ 5.95.

*I Francis* is meant to be a dialogue between St Francis and the reader. The Introduction, *Sainthood—Just a Dream?* is a challenge to the reader and, in the words of the author, "If we put Francis's projects into effect we shall be escaping the atomic apocalypse. Try to think about it... what an extraordinary adventure lies here before us." The thirteen chapters written with such great familiarity with the spirit of St Francis make the person and the message of *IL Poverello* come alive for our times. The book concludes with a series of prayers and a daily office composed in the Franciscan spirit for busy men and women in the turbulent and noisy modern world.

J. MATHIAS, S.J.

# Vidyajyoti

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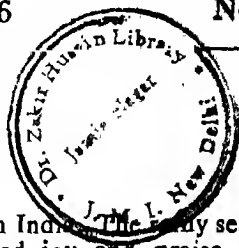
### In This Issue

October is a month of many festivities in India. The rainy season is over, the monsoon crops are being harvested, joy and praise arise naturally in the heart of the people. The Dusserah festival is celebrated in various forms in many parts of the country and the end of the month leads us to Dipavali, the feast of lights, which this year coincides with All Saints' Day. We devote the three main articles of this issue to a reflection on "the Indian Heritage" in its *bhakti*, *jnāna* and *karma mārgas* respectively.

Fr Subash ANAND offers us a carefully researched article on the origin and significance of the Durgā feast and its symbolism, and the positive values to which the festival gives popular expression. The Puranas are naturally the primary source for the study of this myth even if its roots sink into earlier layers of the Indian tradition.

Focusing her attention on an earlier period, Dr Bettina BAUMER brings out for us the riches found in the Upanishads as experienced and articulated by Swami Abhishiktananda. The personal diary (Journal) of Swami has, incidentally, been recently published in French. We hope eventually to give an account of it in our pages. Dr Bäumer was able to use the diary for her article even before it was published.

Finally, Fr G. GISPERT-SAUCH offers us something from an even earlier period, the time that is generally considered as the origin of the Hindu culture. He makes a bibliographical survey of recent books on the Vedic sacrifice and points out areas of interest for Christian theology.



# The Lady and the Demon

Subhash ANAND\*

**I**T WAS 7th October, 1571. The Christian army won a decisive victory over the Turks at Lepanto. It was believed that the Christians were victorious because of the help of the holy Mother of God. To mark this event Pope St Pius V instituted the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Not only is this feast annually celebrated on 7th October, but the whole month of October is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. It is usually in the month of October that our Hindu brethren celebrate the Durgā festival.<sup>1</sup> During this celebration they prayerfully call to mind another battle, in which a divine Woman actually came to the rescue of her devotees, and defeated a mighty demon and his hosts. This is the story of the Goddess slaying the demon Mahisha.

The Durgā festival "is observed all over India in some form or another."<sup>2</sup> Its importance is borne out by the fact that "every digest on *vratas*, *tirthas*, and *pūjā* devotes considerable space to this subject."<sup>3</sup> One scholar even opines that no other festival surpasses it as a popular expression of India's religion and art.<sup>4</sup> It brings together for a joint celebration all the Hindus—the high castes, the low castes, as well as the outcasts.<sup>5</sup> It has also certain tribal elements.<sup>6</sup>

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1. In his novel *Midnight's Children* (New York, Own Books, 1982), Salman RUSHDIE makes his hero say: "As a people, we are obsessed with correspondences. Similarities between this and that, between apparently unconnected things, makes us clap our hands delightedly when we find them out. It is a sort of national longing for form—or perhaps simply an expression of our deep belief that forms lie hidden within reality; that meaning reveals itself only in flashes. Hence our vulnerability" (p. 359). Some of my readers may see my putting together the month of the Rosary and the month of the Durgā festival as another illustration of what Rushdie has to say. Similarly I am inclined to think that the fact that the Assumption of Our Lady and the Independence of our Mother Land are celebrated on the same day is not just a coincidence.

2. P.V. KANE, *History of Dharmasāstra*, vol. V (Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 2nd ed., 1974), p. 154.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

4. R.B. PANDEY, *Hindu Dharmakoś* (Lucknow, Uttar Bharat Hindi Samsthān 1978), pp. 323-24 (constructed from the Hindi original).

5. KANE, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

The cult of the Goddess has played a significant role in the history of India. Let me cite a few examples. It is well known that Shivaji was a great devotee of Bhavānī.<sup>7</sup> Another great warrior who dared to challenge the mighty Moghul Emperor, Guru Govinda Singh, composed the *Chandī-di-vār*. Through this composition he reminds his followers of how in the past God saved his people through Durgā. He also thinks that now God wants him, Govind Singh, to rescue his people. By recalling the deeds of the Goddess, the Sikh Guru wanted the Sikhs to be filled with courage.<sup>8</sup> The national anthem, *Vande mātaram* is taken from the Bengali novel of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee *Ānandamathā*. Originally the song is addressed to the Goddess. In the novel it is she who inspired the Hindus to fight for their freedom. The Goddess is identified with the motherland. To fight for the freedom of the motherland is to serve the Goddess.<sup>9</sup>

In this article I intend first to narrate the story of Durgā slaying the demon. Then I shall venture a sort of exegetical and hermeneutical reflection. I am basing my study on the version of the story as it is found in the *Devī-māhātmya*, a text that is recited during the Durgā festival.<sup>10</sup> It is thus hoped that by understanding the story of the God-

7. Cf. J. DOUGLAS, *Bombay and Western India*, vol. I (London, Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1893), p. 335.

8. Cf. Fauja SINGH et alii: *Sikhism* (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1969), pp. 29-30.

9. B.C. CHATTERJI, *Ānandmath*, Hindi translation, translator not indicated (Prayag, Hindi Sahitya Bhandar, n.d.), pp. 30-32. Some years ago I saw an election poster from Bengal brought out by the Communist Party. It showed a procession of workers led by a woman! This becomes significant when one remembers that in Bengal the festival of Durgā is a major event. Last year I was forced to see a Hindi movie *Mard*. I say "forced" because I was travelling from Udaipur to Bombay in a video-fitted bus. The theme of the movie is the struggle of the natives against the foreigners. Here too we see how the Devī is invoked in crucial moments and how her vehicle (*vāhana*) the tiger comes to the rescue of her devotees. The fact that I mention this movie does not mean that I recommend it. Far from it!

10. Already in 1904, discussing the relation of the *Devī-māhātmya* to the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, in which it is now found, F. E. PARGITER remarked: "The *Devī-māhātmya* stands entirely by itself as a later interpolation. It is a poem complete in itself. Its subject and the character attributed to the goddess show that it is a product of a later age which developed and took pleasure in the sanguinary features of popular religion." See his *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (Delhi, Indological Book House, 1st pub. 1904, rep. 1969), p. vi. In a more recent study, V.S. AGRAWALA maintains that the *Devī-māhātmya* "was originally written as a self-sufficient text of independent existence and then found its way into the present text of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*." See his *Devī-māhātmyam* (Varanasi, All-India Kashiraj Trust, 1963), p. v. He is also of the opinion that it is a "literary creation thrown up by the powerful religious movement of the Gupta Age" and was "completed by about 400 A.D." *Ibid.*, pp. iv-v. That the *Devī-māhātmya* found its place in the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* is in a way in keeping with the earlier tradition of the Mahisha myth, found in the *Mahābhārata*. Here it is narrated by a sage called Markandeya. Some vulgate editions call this section of the epic



dess and the Demon we will be able to understand and appreciate not only the feast, but also the profound longings of the human heart expressed in this celebration.

In the *Devī-māhātmya* the story is narrated by a sage to a king and to a merchant. The king was very devoted to his people,<sup>11</sup> and the merchant was very much attached to his family.<sup>12</sup> Yet both have been deprived of their belongings by people who have no conscience, and so both have taken shelter in the hermitage of that sage. In a way that king and that merchant represent the millions who today are deprived of their human dignity and fundamental rights by men who appear to believe only in money and power. After narrating to them the story of the Goddess, the sage assures the king and the merchant that by devotion to Her, man obtains wealth, a happy family, a concern for right social order,<sup>13</sup> and, eventually, life everlasting.

### *The Mahiṣa-mardana Myth*

Long ago there was a battle between the gods (*devas*) and the demons (*asuras*).<sup>14</sup> It lasted a full hundred years.<sup>15</sup> Mahiṣa, the Buffalo-demon, defeated Indra, the Lord of the gods, and he himself became Indra.<sup>16</sup> With the lotus-born Brahmā as their leader,<sup>17</sup> the immortal gods approached Shiva and Vishnu,<sup>18</sup> and said: "Mahiṣa has taken over the authority of Sūrya, Indra, Agni, Anila, Indu, as

*Markaṇḍeya-samāsya-parvan*. When only numbers are given without any indication of the text, then these are references to the *Devī māhātmya* as found in the edition of Agrawala: the story of the killing of Mahiṣa by the Devī is found in chs. 2-4.

11. Cf. 1.4.

12. Cf. 1.25-26.

13. *matim dharme*, 12.37. In my translation of the expression, I base myself on the definition of *dharma* as given by KANE: "the privileges, duties and obligations of a man, his standard of conduct as a member of the Aryan community, as a member of one of the castes, as a person of a particular stage of life." *Op. cit.*, vol. I (rev. ed., 1968), p. 3.

14. *purā*, 2.1. This word can mean "in former times," "up to the present time," and "in a short time." See V. S. APTE, *The Students' Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, rep. 1970), p. 341. Thus the event presented in the myth is not just in the past, but belongs to man's present as well as to his future. The myth, thus, has a paradigmatic function.

15. *abda-satam* = a hundred years, 2.1. This is, according to Manu, the full span of human life. See KANE, *op. cit.*, vol. II (2nd., 1974), p. 417.

16. In the *Rg-veda* Indra is the most important god. He is the protector of his devotees against all their enemies.

17. According to Hindu mythology, while Vishnu reclines on the cosmic snake, a lotus emerges from his navel. It is within this lotus that Brahmā is born. The lotus is a symbol of purity, of that capacity to discriminate between the good and the evil which must characterize the man of God.

18. The *Devas* are called *tri-dāta* (2.4), i.e., they are the same in the past, in the present, and in the future. They are the immortals.

well as of others, nay even of Yama and Varuna.<sup>19</sup> He has thrown us out of heaven. We are now forced to live on earth as mortals.<sup>20</sup> Harassed by Mahisha, the enemy of the immortals, we have come to you for help. We depend totally on you."<sup>21</sup>

On hearing this, Vishnu and Shiva became furious. From the anger of Vishnu, Shiva and Brahmā a mighty piercing light came forth.<sup>22</sup> So too from the bodies of all the Devas. All this light merged together and the Devas saw before them a mass of piercing light, appearing like a mountain in flames.<sup>23</sup> From this unique light emanating from the bodies of all the Devas a woman was born. Her splendour filled the three worlds. All the Devas experienced a great joy on seeing her, and they all gave her some weapon or ornament. Then she laughed very loudly and the whole universe shook with her laughter.

Observing this commotion, the Asuras got ready to fight, and Mahisha dashed in the direction of that roar. With all his generals and a great army, he attached the Devī. She faced him squarely. Her hot breaths became a vast multitude of attendants. Soon both the armies were locked in a fierce battle. Thousands and thousands of chariots raced towards each other. Millions and millions of arrows

19. Sūrya and Indra, Anila and Indu are cosmic realities (the sun, the moon, and the wind), and as such they ensure cosmic order (*ṛta*). Agni (fire) symbolizes the sacrificial order (*yajña*). Yama and Varuna are the protectors of the moral order (*dharma*). These three, *ṛta*, *yajña*, and *dharma* are interrelated. The fact that Mahisha had overpowered the presiding deities of these three spheres means that there was total chaos.

20. The *Satapatha-brāhmaṇa* says that "the gods are the truth (*sat*) and man is the untruth (*asat*). I.1.1.4. The *Bṛhadaranyaka-upaniṣad*, which belongs to the above Brāhmaṇa, has the following prayer: "From the unreal (*asat*) lead to me the Real (*sat*), from darkness (*tamas*) lead me to Light (*jyotis*), from death (*mṛtyu*) lead me to Immortality (*amṛta*)." It also explains that *asat*, *tamas* and *mṛtyu* are the same, and that *sat*, *jyotis* and *amṛta* are the same. I.3.28. Thus when the gods have been forced to leave heaven and live on earth as mortals, they have passed from the world of Truth to the domain of Untruth! If this be the lot of the protectors of *dharma*, what will happen to *dharma* itself?

21. *prapanna*=totally dependent, 2.7. In later *bhakti* tradition, *prapatti* indicates total abandonment of oneself to God, allowing Him to do all that needs to be done in order to attain *mokṣa*. The *Bhagavad-gītā* uses the same expression to describe Arjuna's dependence on Krishna. 2.7.

22. *tejas*=piercing light, 2.9. This word is derived from the root *tij*, to pierce. The first step in liberation is the experience of inner enlightenment, the experience of a piercing light, that sets man thinking, making him question his own values, showing him the folly of his present situation.

23. This description of the light as a mountain in flames (2.11) is evocative of the birth of another mighty saviour figure, Skanda. After Shiva has dropped his seed, it is taken up by Agni (fire) and a white/golden mountain appears. See W.D. O' FLAHERTY, *Siva: the Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 1981), pp. 104-5.

darkened the sky. In this great martial celebration,<sup>24</sup> while the forces of the Devī sounded their conches and beat their drums, she sportively razed to the ground in a moment the mighty army of the Demon-king.<sup>25</sup>

Seeing the annihilation of their hosts, the generals of Mahisha came forward for a single combat with the Devī. They were absolutely no match for her. In a few moments she playfully cut them to pieces.<sup>26</sup> Eventually Mahisha himself entered the arena in his own buffalo form.<sup>27</sup> He first tried to instill fear in the heart of Devī's followers by a boisterous display of his strength. The Devī lassoed him. Then Mahisha gave up his buffalo form and appeared successively as a lion, as a man, and as an elephant. Realizing that all this was not of much help, he resumed his original buffalo form.<sup>28</sup> The Devī then drank some wine and laughed at him.<sup>29</sup> She then jumped over him, pressed him against the ground and struck him with her spear. He then emerged partly in human form. The Devī severed his head, and that was the end of Mahisha.

Then all the Devas reverently bent their heads before the Devī, and sang her praises: "We bow before Ambikā who has created this whole universe.<sup>30</sup> She is worthy of all praise. Even Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva cannot fathom her greatness. May she protect the whole universe and destroy all evil . . . You are the supreme, primordial Prakṛti, characterized by the three *guṇas*, yet you are free from all

24. *yuddha-mahā-utsava*, 2.54. An *utsava* is a joyful celebration. By describing the battle as an *utsava*, the author is anticipating the joy of the victory that is certain.

25. *līlayā* = sportively, 2.49. Hindu thinkers have used the word *līlā* to describe the creative and saving activity of God. The idea of play implies ease and joy, as well as selflessness.

26. *līlayā*, 3.3.

27. *sva-rūpeṇa*, 3.20.

28. Elsewhere we are told that a demon, carried away by his infatuation for a she-buffalo, had intercourse with her. She gave birth to *kāma-rūpa-mahiṣa*, a buffalo-demon who could assume any form he wanted to. See *Vāmana-purāṇa*, cr. ed., 18.60. The expression *kāma-rūpa* can also mean "he who is formed out of desire." This meaning will also go well with the bestiality that resulted in the birth of Mahisha. Thus he is the embodiment of desire (*kāma*). According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *kāma* is the greatest enemy of man. See 3.39.

29. In the *Rg-veda*, Indra is strengthened by drinking Soma, particularly when he prepares to fight the demon Vṛtra. See A. A. MACDONELL *Vedic Mythology* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, rep. 1974), p. 56. However the idea of drinking wine (*madhu*, 3.36) could also be the result of the influence of popular or tribal religion.

30. Ambikā first appears in the *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā* 3.5, as the sister of Rudra. See MACDONELL, *op. cit.*, p. 74. In as much as God is the source of all life, then the mother-symbol fits Him. But in as much as He is the end of time and also that in which time exists, He can be spoken of as the primordial (source of) time. Thus the Goddess is not only Ambikā, but also Kālī.

defects.<sup>31</sup> You are Svāhā and Svadhā.<sup>32</sup> You are the source of our salvation and the remover of all our sorrows.<sup>33</sup> You are Durgā, the only boat to cross the ocean of earthly life.<sup>34</sup> You are Sarasvatī, Lakshmi and Pārvatī.<sup>35</sup> People blessed by you have fame, wealth, devoted spouses, loving children and faithful servants. You dispel poverty, pain and fear. In your kindness you redeem even your enemies. Protect us always, O Ambikā.”<sup>36</sup>

Pleased with their hymn and worship, the Devī addressed the Devas: “It will be a great joy for me to give you whatever you ask of me.” The Devas replied: “In killing Mahisha, you have done all needed to be done. But as you wish to grant us a boon, then please come to our aid whenever, burdened with affliction, we remember you. May your devotees prosper, and have wealth, success and fame.” The Devī said: “Be it so!” and disappeared.

### *Experiencing Time*

The story of the Goddess and the demon is related to a king and to a merchant. Though both of them are good and very devoted to their people, they have been deprived of all their wealth by their own people. While the merchant is a private individual, the king is a public person. Thus it is on both these levels that injustice is experienced. But the evil with which the myth is concerned is much more than this expropriation. It is a power embodied in the person of Mahisha. His victory over Sūrya, Indra, Anila and Indu symbolizes the power of evil in the universe. His victory over Agni indicates the corruption within the cult. His victory over Yama and Varuna points to the decay of morality. The cosmic law (*rta*), the cult (*yajña*), and the social order (*dharma*) are all deeply inter-

31. According to Sāṃkhya, there are two ultimate principles. The *puruṣa* is beyond all composition, while *prakṛti* is constituted by the three *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*). The former is the pure principle of consciousness, while the latter explains all change, change which is seen as evil. Here our text makes a daring synthesis: The Devī is *saguna*, and yet beyond all defects.

32. *Svāhā* and *svadhā* indicate the offerings to the gods and to the departed respectively.

33. Once again the Devī, though the primordial *Prakṛti*, is different from *prakṛti* as understood in Sāṃkhya. There she is the explanation of the *tāpa-traya*, the threefold sufferings, i.e., suffering coming from inside us, that caused by elements outside us, and that of which we do not know the origin.

34. The Devī is called Durgā because she helps man to cross the difficult (*durga*) ocean of life. 4.10.

35. See AGRAWALA's comment on 4.10, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

36. There are many names given to the Devī—a not uncommon feature of hymns of praise in the Purāṇas. I have mentioned only a few, which seemed to me to have a bearing on our theme.

related. When evil affects one of them the other two cannot remain untouched. When man loses the sense of the sacred, then his relation to other human beings and to nature is also distorted. Consequently, we have not only gross social injustice but also severe ecological imbalance. Why does this happen?

The myth has used a symbol to portray evil: the buffalo. It is true that in the story the demon appears as a lion, as an elephant, and also as a man. But his real form is the buffalo.<sup>37</sup> Already in the *R̥g-veda* we are told that Mahisha tried to invade the region of Indra, the region of light.<sup>38</sup> A contemporary writer, retelling the story of Mahisha, says that "the buffalo is slow-witted, thick-skinned, coarse, enjoys lounging in slush, and symbolizes a mere physical development, fit for the benighted nether world."<sup>39</sup> Thus the myth comes back to a fundamental Hindu tenet: ignorance is the cause of all human suffering. If a person loses the sense of the sacred, then it is due to his lack of true wisdom. The black buffalo is an apt symbol for that darkness which can cloud man's intellect and understanding, and thus bring about a reversal of values.<sup>40</sup>

According to Hindu mythology, the black buffalo is also the vehicle of Yama, the god of death. As the vehicle participates in the symbolic character of the god, Mahisha is the symbol of death. He is the enemy of the immortal gods.<sup>41</sup> Because of his victory the Devas, who themselves are immortal and who uphold the eternal *dharma*, are now forced to live on this earth as mortals.<sup>42</sup> Life presupposes law and order. When these are absent then death is sure to come. While this remains true, it may give the impression that death is contingent to human existence, merely a result of his defective choice.

The Hindu tradition sees existence in the world—*samsāra*—as the fundamental tragedy. Underlying this conception, there is a profound understanding of time (*kāla*). Time can be seen as the very possibility of human existence, because man by his very metaphysical nature is a space-time creature. His existence is in time. Thus in one

37. See above, notes 27 and 28.

38. AGRAWALA, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

39. R.K. NARAYAN, *God, Demons and Others* (Delhi, Hind Pocket Books, 1973), p. 58.

40. The Devās are led by Brahmā, who is said to have been born from a lotus. This flower, growing in water, remains clean even when the water is dirty. Thus it is a symbol of wisdom, which enables man to remain unstained even in the dirty ocean of life.

41. *amara-ari*, 2.7.

42. *yathā martyāḥ* 2.6.

sense time is his womb, and so the Goddess can be called Kālī.<sup>43</sup> But time can be seen also as the tomb of man, because time is constantly going by, departing, or to be more correct, man experiences his own life slipping out of his hands. He sees quite a bit of his life as already deceased, gone for ever. Death is the most powerful expression of passing away, and therefore it is rightly called *kāla*, and is fittingly symbolized by the black (*kāla*) buffalo.<sup>44</sup> Thus while evil has a very real historical origin, calling for action in history, it also has an aspect that transcends history, belonging to the very ontological structure of man. The ignorance, of which we have spoken above, is the result of not accepting this ontological dimension of man and creation. It consists in imagining as permanent that which by its very nature is doomed to death.

If the very experience of time (*kāla*) is also the experience of death (*kāla*), then the struggle against Mahisha is not just one moment of man's life. Our myth says that the struggle lasted a full hundred years—the full span of human life. Thus the myth is not simply something that happened in the distant past, but portrays a struggle that belongs to man's present and future.<sup>45</sup> When Mahisha is killed the Devas admit that the Devi has done everything needed to be done, and that nothing else remains to be done.<sup>46</sup> But they still request her to come to their aid whenever, burdened with affliction, they cry out to her.

### *Redeeming Time*

Thus if evil is more than an historical reality, then an essential element in the struggle against it is the intervention of a power that transcends time, and therefore transcends death. If time is to be redeemed, then it needs to be transcended. Liberation is not just action in history, but also an appeal to Him who is beyond history. Further the experience of time is also the experience of repetition. A celebration repeatedly recalls to our mind the mystery of our redemption. This recalling is not just a mental process, but an experience of salvation.<sup>47</sup> The myth belongs to the present and to the

43. E.g., 7.5.

44. The philosophical understanding of time as the "stage" of human experience is found already in the *Atharva-veda*. Cf. 19.53, 54.

45. See above, note 14.

46. *kṛtam sarvam na kincid avasiṣyate*, 4. 30.

47. "celebration" comes from the Latin verb "*celebro*" which, *inter alia*, means "to do something frequently", "to repeat". See C. T. Lewis and C. Short *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 308c. It was Raimundo PANIKAR who first drew my attention to this etymology of "celebration". See his *The Vedic Experience* (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977), p. 28.

future of man. According to the story, the Goddess does not exterminate the demons, but allows them to be reborn in higher worlds.<sup>48</sup> Time becomes meaningful only when it is related to eternity.

From the *piercing light* emanating from the bodies of the Devas a woman was born. If evil and suffering are the result of ignorance, then it is to be expected that the first step in the process of liberation should be the experience of a piercing light, a light that penetrates our inner selves, a light that unearths false values, false principles, false gods, clearly discerning the eternal and the temporal. But liberation is not an individualistic ideal. Both the process and the goal are communitarian. The celebration brings out this community dimension of liberation. How is this community formed?

Vishnu and Shiva are the two most popular gods of India. In the Purāṇas we have many stories to illustrate their supremacy. A pro-Vishnu text will show how when the gods are in trouble they approach Shiva for help, but he tells them that he is helpless, and so they, with him, go to Vishnu. A pro-Shiva text will reverse the roles of the two gods to make Shiva appear supreme. But in our myth, the Devas, with Brahmā as their leader, go to Vishnu and Shiva. Evaluating the *Devīmāhātmya*, the source of our version of the myth, V.S. Agrawala says; "Its watch-word was religious devotion conceived in the spirit of broad synthesis."<sup>49</sup> In India we have not only the Shaivites and the Vaishnavites, but we also have followers of other religious traditions. The story of the Goddess calls all men and women to work together in their struggle against evil. The Goddess, who eventually destroys Mahisha, is born from the light emanating from all the gods. The wisdom of different religious traditions and the cooperation of all men of good will, even of the unbeliever, are necessary if man is to overcome all the forces of evil that seek to destroy his humanity.

The sage who created the myth of the Goddess slaying the demon, specially as we have it in our version, had a rich imagination. But he is rooted in the tradition of his people. Agrawala thinks that our text "is a fine attempt to present the ancient material in a new formulation," by a person who "was also possessed of a dynamic, almost modern mind, having an interpretative genius."<sup>50</sup> The *Mahīṣa-*

48. Cf. 4.18-19.

49. AGRAWALA *op. cit.*, p. iii. PARGITER thinks that "The *Devi-mahatmya* is a compound of the most opposite characters", *op. cit.*, p. vii.

50. AGRAWALA, *loc. cit.*

*mardana* myth carries the tradition forward in two ways. First, there is the core of the myth: a story that is as old as the *Rg-veda*. Already there we have the first reference to Mahisha trying to invade the kingdom of Indra.<sup>51</sup> We have also the ancient myth of Indra overcoming the demon Vṛtra—a myth which can be considered as paradigmatic of all subsequent myths describing the struggle between the Devas and the Asuras.<sup>52</sup> Second, the narrator of our myth embellishes his account with copious explicit references to the great Hindu philosophical and mythological tradition. The Devī is the Trayī of the Vedic tradition,<sup>53</sup> the Svāhā and the Svadhā of the Brahmanical sacrificial system,<sup>54</sup> the Sarasvatī, Lakshmi and Pārvatī of the Puranic myths,<sup>55</sup> the primordial Prakṛti of Sāṃkhya,<sup>56</sup> the supreme saving Vidyā of Vedānta.<sup>57</sup> The little tradition—the local cults and folk cultures—too finds its place. The very fact that the Devī becomes the supreme, beyond even Vishnu and Shiva,<sup>58</sup> is a powerful indication of the self-asserting presence of the little tradition. The action of the myth also is a reminder of the past. The Devī is born as the embodiment of the splendour of all the Devas.<sup>59</sup> Her birth is also evocative of the *viśva-rūpa-darśana* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*,<sup>60</sup> of the emergence of the *jyotir-liṅga*,<sup>61</sup> and of the birth of the mighty saviour, Skanda.<sup>62</sup> Her drinking of wine, before making her final attack on Mahisha,<sup>63</sup> could be evocative of Indra who drank Soma before going to fight.<sup>64</sup> It could also be indicative of some local cult where wine-drinking was part of the ritual.<sup>65</sup> The community engaged in the process of liberation needs to be as ecumenical as possible, but it also needs to situate itself in its own history. However impatient we may be with our past, our past is part of ourselves. If we take our temporality as an essential part of our personality—and without it time cannot be redeemed—then we have to acknowledge

51. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

52. See MACDONELL, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

53. *trayī*, 4. 9.

54. See above, note 32.

55. See above, note 35.

56. *paramā prakṛtis tvam ādyā*, 4.6.

57. *muktihetuḥ . . . vidyā paramā*, 4.8.

58. *hari-hara-ādibhir-apī-aparā*, 4.6.

59. *samasta-devānām tejo-rāśi-samudbhavām*, 2.18.

60. See *Bhagavad-gītā*, ch. 11.

61. See *Līṅga-purāṇa*, cr. ed., 1.17.

62. See above, note 23.

63. Cf. 3.35.

64. Soma was an intoxicating drink, giving man a foretaste of life immortal. See *Rg-veda*, 8.48.3.

65. The use of a drink that gives man the experience of another life, a life free from anxiety, fear and inhibition, is a fairly universal cultic practice.



our past, for in denying it we are not accepting ourselves. Needless to say, this loyalty to the past is a creative concern for the present and for the future.

### *Mother and Child*

It is significant that our text says that a *woman* emerged from the combined light emanating from the bodies of the Devas.<sup>66</sup> Only twenty verses later is she called Devī.<sup>67</sup> The *Mahiṣa-mardana* myth is known to the *Mahābhārata*, but there it is Skanda, the son of Shiva, who slays the demon.<sup>68</sup> Hence the replacement of Skanda by Devī is not just a scribal error. It is the purposeful act of the sage who retold the myth. In this he is creatively daring and daringly creative. In the earlier myths women do figure, but mostly as spouses of gods and heroes, playing a very secondary role. They even appear in some stories as the seducers of sages engaged in penance. In this myth it is a woman who holds our attention from start to finish, that too as the great Saviour. Thus the celebration of Durgā festival is a powerful invitation to all of us to rethink our theology. We need to rethink the role of women both in the social as well as the religious sphere.<sup>69</sup>

The Aryans who invaded India were wandering nomads. So were the Israelites. Nomadic races tend to be patriarchal, because when they move from place to place in search of pasture for their flock, they need a lot of physical strength to safeguard themselves and their cattle. But settled communities, that are therefore agricultural, tend to be matriarchal. There are reasons to think that at least some of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India were of a matriarchal community. The replacement of Skanda by Devī is thus a victory of the more native element over subsequent invaders. It is one instance of a suppressed community reasserting itself.

After the Devī has slain the demon, the Devas praise her in a solemn hymn, which begins and ends by calling her Ambikā,<sup>70</sup> and in our myth it is by this name that the Devī is most frequently in-

66. This is the reason why I chose "The Lady and the Demon" and not "The Goddess and the Demon" as the title of this paper.

67. Cf. 2.31. Her first appearance is mentioned in 2.12, where she is called *nārī*.

68. Cr. ed., 3.221.52-66; 7.141.14.

69. *Kumārī-pūja*, the worship of young virgins, is a special feature of the Durgā festival. See KANE, *op. cit.*, vol. V., p. 170.

70. See 4.2, and 26.

voked.<sup>71</sup> Thus the Devī is not just a woman, but she is above all the Mother. A myth becomes powerful because of the presence of symbols. Now the appeal of symbols is to a great extent determined by their relation to man's subconscious. The mother-symbol is perhaps the most powerful because it is linked with man's primordial experience—that of his mother, an experience that begins with his first moments on this earth. And if what some claim is true, then man becomes conscious of his mother even before he is born, when he is still in the womb. Further, the greater the area of man's life evoked by a symbol, the greater is its stability and appeal. Now the mother symbol evokes not only an individual's immediate family, but also his clan or tribe, his country, and even this earth. Some even speak of the cosmic mother.

If Mahisha is death, leading man to his tomb, then Ambikā is the womb, giving life to man. If Mahisha is Kāla—death, then Ambikā is the Bhadra-Kālī,<sup>72</sup> the auspicious Kālī—the death of death.<sup>73</sup> A patriarchal mentality sees the woman as a temptation, causing spiritual blindness, leading man to bondage and suffering. This mentality finds its philosophical crystalization in Sāṃkhya. The matriarchal tradition sees woman as the primordial inspiration,<sup>74</sup> the highest wisdom,<sup>75</sup> the cause of man's salvation,<sup>76</sup> removing poverty, suffering and fear.<sup>77</sup> She is all this because she is the Mother of the universe.<sup>78</sup>

The idea that the ultimate saving reality is the Mother, raises some very serious questions. Does not our theology need to be liberated from patriarchal chauvinism? Are there really sound reasons to speak of God only in masculine terms? Will not "God the Mother" be as appropriate as, nay even more than "God the Father"? If time is an essential dimension of man's experience, then is it also not an essential factor in the expression of his experience? Is not the Word of God as expressed in the Scripture given to us in a cultural framework of a given historical moment? Should not then our hermeneutis

71. "Ambikā" is found ten times, while "Candikā" six times. However, in the whole text of the *Devī-māhātmya*, the former occurs twenty-six times, while the latter twenty-nine times.

72. See 3.8, and 4.33.

73. *antaka*, 4.12.

74. *savitri*, 1.15. See note 56.

75. *parama-vidyā*, 4.8.

76. *mukti-hetu*, 4.8.

77. *dāridrya-duḥkha-bhaya-hārini*, 4.16. Another important item of the Durgā festival is the establishment of the *kalāśa*, the pot symbolizing plenty. See KANE *op. cit.*, vol. V. p. 183.

78. *jagan-mātā*, 3.33.

of that expression of the Word of God go beyond the nomadic-patriarchal society where it was recorded? Concretely this will mean, *inter alia*, a thorough and open discussion of the question regarding the ordination of women.

The dominance of the Mother in our myth draws our attention to another crippling aspect of our contemporary culture: the loss of adequate mother-experience. More and more children are deprived of their mothers. They—the mothers—are absent from their children for various reasons. It could be due to poverty—they are forced to leave their homes in search of livelihood. It could also be due to a consumer urge: they need more money to buy things that they do not really need. It could be due to other more engaging—even though unnecessary and uncreative—involvements, e.g., the TV! The present writer is of the opinion that if today there is so much violence, promiscuity, the need to "love" and "to be loved", to possess and to be possessed, neurosis and psychosis—and all these are forms of evil, aspects of Mahisha—then it is, to some extent at least, if not largely, due to an inadequate mother-experience. We need more hands to rock our cradles.

The loss of adequate mother-experience is intimately connected with the loss of childhood. Today many children do not have space to run about freely, to sing and to dance on their own. Many of them never witness the glorious splendour of a sunrise, or the nostalgic beauty of a sunset. So many of them are made to leave their homes at an early age to daily spend hours in creches, kindergartens, and nursery schools—all very comfortable perhaps, but so artificial! Too early in life they experience regimentation. One of the tragic outcomes of the loss of childhood is the lessening of symbol-consciousness and of authentic creative expression. To be redeemed man needs to become a child!

The loss of adequate mother-experience is also visible in the attitude of modern man to nature. Due to urbanization, due to our pattern of education—our schools are like factories<sup>79</sup>—, due to industrialization, man has been alienated from nature. He looks at nature from a utilitarian point of view. For him nature is no longer the great mother, *mater*, *mātr*. It is just matter, *materia*, *mātrā*. The loss of nature has some far-reaching consequences. Apart from the

79. Rabindranath TAGORE once wrote: "A school in a town is a factory which can only teach us to regard the world as a machine." *Towards Universal Man* (Bombay, Asia Pub. House, 1961), p. 73.

loss of symbol-consciousness, man loses his basic 'goodness' which expresses itself in a concern for others. The industrial man is so obsessed with utility that everything, even persons, are seen that way. This is the core of exploitation.

### *Towards the Eternal Dawn*

I am inclined to believe that underlying the *Mahiṣa-mardana* myth there is a specific experience of nature: that of the Dawn. For the primitive man a dark night evokes fear. It confines him to his cave or whatever he uses for a shelter. He is afraid to move out as there may be wild animals to attack him, or even hostile men on the prowl. In this situation the Dawn comes as a saving experience.<sup>80</sup> She comes with the promise of life. With her advent the birds burst forth into a liturgy of joyful praise. All the forces of darkness crawl back to their lairs. Men can freely move about. The Dawn is the Mother because she makes life and movement possible. She brings freedom to man. She is also the Mother because she gives birth to the Sun.<sup>81</sup> The man close to nature does not miss this.

However thick the darkness of the night, man is certain that the Dawn will come and shatter that darkness. Hence the struggle, though it goes on, contains the certainty of victory. Our myth reflects this certainty. First of all, it speaks of the fight between the Devī and Mahiṣa as a great martial celebration.<sup>82</sup> A celebration always implies joy, joy either for having attained a desired goal, or joy resulting from a firm hope that the desired good will be attained. This idea of the certainty of victory is further re-inforced by the fact that for the Devī the struggle is a mere play.<sup>83</sup>

One question does remain: Is not the dawn itself part of man's temporality? The fear-bringing night and the joyful dawn will continue to follow each other. Hence is not the trust man places in the appearance of the Dawn itself part of his darkness, part of the night? The answer to this question is a firm "No!" There is in the heart of man a primordial longing for the eternal Dawn—the Dawn that will

80. We first come across this idea already in the *Rg-veda*. See 6.64.3 (where the Dawn appears as a warrior) and 7.75.1 (where the Dawn is seen as chasing away evil spirits and darkness).

81. The sun is the original full pot, the *pūrṇa-kumbha*, pouring out its light and warmth on the earth, making the earth habitable and fertile for man. See above, note 77.

82. See above, note 24.

83. See above, notes 25 and 26.

herald the eternal day, the day that will have no evening.<sup>84</sup> In Jesus Christ this longing becomes a reality. That eternal Dawn is his resurrection, for then there will no more be darkness, no more tears, no more death, because the Risen Lord is the death of death.<sup>85</sup> He is Mahākāla, and shall I dare to say, he is also Mahākālī.<sup>86</sup> He is the one who truly kills the demon of death. Who is this demon of death? Who is Mahisha?

We noted that human suffering has a metaphysical and an historical or existential dimension. The experience of time belongs to man's metaphysical nature, while inordinate desire, which leads to sin,<sup>87</sup> is an historical and existential reality. Mahisha is the embodiment of both: he is the symbol of death, the most powerful reminder of our temporality. He is also the embodiment of desire. He is *kāla* (time, death) and *kāma* (desire).<sup>88</sup> Thus we can say that Mahisha is within man. Only when man freely surrenders himself to God by fully accepting himself, and therefore by accepting his death, is he redeemed. Through death man not only enters the eternity of God, but also fully discovers his humanity. During his pilgrimage he experiences in some way his humanity, but he also feels very strongly the animal within himself. Before his redemption, his true form is Mahisha (death), because both by virtue of time and due to sin he is doomed to death. He begins to die the day he is born. During the fight with the Goddess Mahisha appears in many forms—as a lion, as an elephant, as a man. But his real form is the buffalo (death). As he experiences death at the hands of the Devī, we see the human form emerging from the dying buffalo.<sup>89</sup> It is only in death that man begins to live.

84. Compare Genesis 1:31 with Genesis 2:1-3.

85. See my "A Pre-Christian Easter Prayer", *Vidyajyoti*, 1983 April, pp. 135-41.

86. It is not without reason that both in the *Gospel of John* (16:21) and in the *Book of Revelation* (12:1-6) we have the figure of the woman in travail.

87. See *Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.39.

88. See n. 28.

89. The text simply says that the demon half emerged from the mouth of the buffalo (3.40-41). However we are right in saying that he emerged in the human form. See Plate XXXI in P. THOMAS *Epics, Myths and Legends of India* (Bombay, D.B. Taraporevala, n.d.), and Plate XXIV in P. THOMAS, *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners* (Bombay, D.B. Taraporevala, n.d.).

# Abhishiktananda and the Upanishads

Bettina BAUMER\*

**E**VER since the awakening of Dom Henri Le Saux (later Swami Abhishiktananda's) interest in India in his monastery in France, it was the Upanishads which attracted his spiritual attention. This remained so till the end of his life with an extraordinary fidelity. Not by chance the last writing which he left unfinished and was published posthumously, was his *Introduction to the Upanishads*.<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to repeat what he has written in this essay, as well as in almost all his works. I only want to throw some light on the spiritual integration which took place in Swamiji as a result of his taking the Upanishads seriously.

As a Christian monk he felt it his spiritual duty to integrate the Upanishadic experience into his Christian faith. But in his sincerity and integrity, he realized that an integration or a Christian interpretation could not mean superimposing anything extraneous on the Upanishads, that is, anything which they had not already in themselves. So his adventure in taking the Upanishads as his "Guru" ultimately led him to follow their call to the utmost depths, to the "cave of the heart", and discover in them "the Real of the real" (*satyasya Satyam*). Only in the depth of the experience of the rishis themselves could he also discover his "Christian" depth-experience. We shall see how this happened in the case of one instance.

One remark may be necessary before starting: for Swamiji theory and practice, Upanishadic exegesis and experience, *vidyā* and *yoga*, were one. There was no artificial dichotomy; each was enriched and clarified by the other. So I shall also try to show how, at least in a few cases, his experience helped him to a better understanding of

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1. In *The Further Shore*, Delhi, ISPCK, 1st ed. 1975. Part 2, *The Upanishads—An Introduction*, pp. 57-111.

the texts, and vice versa. The language of the Upanishads itself became so transparent for him, that one word was enough to set him off, to inspire him. His *Journal* is full of Upanishadic expressions, not to talk of the content.

If we speak in "objective" terms about Swamiji's contribution to the interpretation of the Upanishads, we could perhaps mention two aspects, without going into details. One is that he looked at the Upanishads with a fresh mind uninfluenced by philosophical schemes of interpretation. In the Indian (Hindu) tradition itself it seems that the Upanishads are mostly read and understood in the context of Śaṅkara's Vedānta. Without underestimating Śaṅkara's merits, we must nevertheless say that this philosophical perspective is a kind of stained glass through which the Upanishads take on a certain colour. Swamiji tried to be free of any preconceived ideas—though at the beginning he was himself strongly influenced by Vedānta philosophy prevalent in Sannyāsa circles.

The second original point is his reading of the Upanishads as a Christian monk, which does not mean with a Christian bias. He could, from the depth of his own Christian experience, establish inner correspondences—precisely "*upanishads*"—with the experience of the rishis. It was for him not a matter of comparison on an intellectual level, but a real discovery which could only be expressed in the very short formula of the Kāṭha: "This is verily That!" (*etad vai tat*). He did not make sweeping statements on the ultimate unity of mystical experience everywhere in the world, but articulated different inner revelations which he could not help but relate to each other. This is actually his greatest contribution to a possible "Christian" understanding or reading of the Upanishads. As he says in his essay on the Upanishads:

The time is ripe for spreading far and wide the "Upanishadic" experience of freedom, as it may be called . . . But in fact its spread as a means of liberation and joy for mankind will only be possible at the present juncture in human history, if it is interpreted by seers who are at home in two languages: the language of the Upanishads which they have learnt well enough for it to become their second nature—and the language of the seekers themselves, whatever it may be. . . .

On the one hand, the Upanishads cannot simply be reduced to formulas in any language whatever, for they are above all a matter of experience, a shock-treatment, an interior lightning-flash, induced by a whole series of approaches which converge from every point of the mental horizon upon this control focus of overwhelming illumination. On the other hand, this experience

needs to be absorbed and assimilated by a man's every faculty—one might say through every pore—so that his being might be wholly transformed.<sup>2</sup>

It may seem daring to start where we would expect to end—with the highest experience which convinced Swamiji of the truth of the Upanishads. But I feel justified in this reversal on two accounts: First, because we need not repeat here what Swamiji said very well in his books. We are more concerned with his experience—an experience which forms the very basis (*pratiṣṭhā*) of what he has written. The second justification comes from a great mystic of the 10th-11th century, Abhinavagupta. While dealing with the four mystical ways (*upāya*), in his *magnum opus*, *Tantrāloka*, he starts with the highest or "fourth" way which is actually called "non-way" (*anupāya*), because at this stage the soul is already one with the ultimate Reality. To start from the top, so to say, may not be a pedagogical procedure, but a technological one, for it places us in the perspective of God, or, if you wish, of grace.

In the case of Swamiji we are justified also because we know that he attained the experience transcending all the limited ways. He himself remembered the time when he was still in his monastery and one of the older monks, a close friend of his, advised him to practice many virtues. His comment is:

Our seers (i.e. the Indian rishis) have attained the further shore in one leap, a non-stop flight. I already told it to my Father N. in Kergonan, who advised me to practice a lot of virtues, which he had studied with Suarez: Is it not much more direct to act out of love? Why do you want me to sit in a bus and count all the stops, if I am offered a free place in an aeroplane which brings me to my destination non-stop? (1956).

I am going to quote a passage from the *Journal* and comment on it, because it is not easy to understand. The context is an extraordinary experience he had with his disciple Ajatananda in Phulchatti on the night of the Ascension, 10th May 1972. His meditation starts with the theme of the Ascension—the Ascension which had been for him, even from the day of his monastic profession, one of the most important feasts.

... Jesus attains to this light—*tejas*—in the bosom of the Father, when he ascends with his body, *śarīra*; he has attained to it in his bodily death beyond death. He resumed his body—beyond this disjunction of the Purusha from (in) this body of mortal flesh. For it is at the boundary of the *śarīra* that the Purusha *uttama* (Supreme Purusha) is found.

2. *The Further Shore*, p. 100f.



The Resurrection is *jīvanmukti*.

In the light of Brahman the world is a mystery of threeness, an interweaving of trinities.

There is the eternal, archetypal Trinity, the Unborn from which all are born, that which IS, that which shines forth in all. . . .

Jesus, the Spirit, is the love which is at the heart of all, the soul of all, the being of all, the light of all, *sarvabhūta-antarātmā*, the bond between beings, their *samsat* (communion) which is their being.

The experience of the Upanishads is true, *I know*.

*vedāham etam puruṣam mahāntam  
ādityavarṇam tamaṣaḥ parastāt  
tam eva viditvā atī mṛtyum eti  
nānya panthā vidyate' yandya* (Śvet. Up. III, 8)

I know him, that great Puruṣa,  
of the colour of the sun, beyond darkness.  
Whoever knows him passes beyond death.  
There is no other way to reach the goal.

And I know that what I have taught in *Sagesse* is true, even if badly expressed.

The Trinity at every level,  
the depth of every deep,  
the Real of the real (*satyasya satyam*)

. . . dwelling in light unapproachable (1 Tim 6:16)

I know, but I can only communicate this knowledge to *śraddhā* (faith): no more could Jesus—"O men of little faith!"

I am.

The *mantras* in which the *rishis* have enshrined the experience, less it should cause men to die at the time this inner leap (or: disjunction). The "aspiration" towards the *saḥasrāra*, absorption from above. The *puruṣa* who is his own light (B. Vp. IV, 3), *svaprakāśa*, there the *ātman* has attained to *śāntātmā* (the Self of peace) (Katha III, 13, Mait. V, 11), *samprasāda ātmā* (the Self of serenity, Chānd, VIII, 3,4), and from there alone peace radiates, peace is found.

Man dies as a result of experiencing *ananta* (the infinite)

beyond the beyond  
Brahman  
Dead, dead, in becoming Brahman, the All  
Brahman *sarvam*  
Yes, that is true,  
the absorption in this Source!

The Lord has said to me: *This day I have begotten you.*

O this *tejomaya* Puruṣa  
before the creation of the worlds,

in their creation  
the golden embryo  
all!

This Purusha in the golden embryo  
who is born *a-ja*  
who comes in every birth —  
ah, but it is myself!

*Hiranmaya para garbha* (golden-coloured, beyond the womb)

Ah, when he reveals himself,  
when the sun explodes,  
the end of the world,  
then I AM.

Shattering experience of the light!

Blessed art thou, O Father  
who hast drawn us to thyself . . .  
called us to be thyself,  
Called us to be,  
called us to the Unborn,

*jyoti—sat—amṛtam*  (Light, Being Immortality),<sup>3</sup>

Let us try to understand this mystical outburst. Obviously in such a highpoint of experience there is no question of making a water-tight distinction between Christian and Upanishadic expressions. Swamiji pours out his experience on the pages of his diary in whatever language comes to him spontaneously and serves him to identify what he feels. One must not therefore be critical about this mixture of languages. It is a sign of the integration that has already taken place in his heart, which functions like a melting-pot, producing the burning light of the *tejas* of which he was so fond of speaking.

1.—At first we have the identification of the Ascension of Jesus, and the mystical ascension of himself, his disciple and thus of every person who reaches this level, with the “ascension” of the Purusha, as it is described in the Chāndogya:

Now that peaceful (Person), when he arises out of the body, attains the supreme light and is manifest in his won form. He is the *ātman*, immortal and fearless, this is Brahman. The name of that Brahman is Truth (*Chāndogya Up. VIII, 3.4*).

What has here been translated by “peaceful” is *samprasāda*, one of the favourite words of Swamiji which could inspire him to ecstasy. As he was very fond of Sanskrit etymology which often reveals the depth of a word, let us see the different meanings of *samprasāda*

3. Extract from Swamiji's Journal dated 11.5.1972. Cf. Henri LE SAUX/Swami ABHISHIKTANANDA, *La montée au fond du cœur*, Paris, O.E.I.L. 1986, pp. 425-427. Translation by Rev James Stuart.

(from the verb *sam-pra-sad*—, to settle down quietly, be kindly disposed or gracious): perfect quiet, serenity, grace and also trust, confidence.<sup>4</sup> In this one word, all the spiritual achievements seem to be contained. If we accept a certain sequence, first comes the quiet settling down of the mind, just as meditation is sometimes compared to letting the mud and dirt in a glass of water settle down, so that it becomes clear and transparent. Thanks to this quiet there is serenity, and hence peace radiates. Therefore the peaceful person is full of grace and kindness. In other words, only when we have achieved peace are we able to receive grace.

To come back to the Chāndogya passage, which is only hinted at in our text, when the Inner Man (Purusha) is pacified, transparent and serene, he can attain to the supreme light and be revealed "in his own from", *svena rupena*. *Svarūpa* is our very being which is unveiled and unstained by any superimpositions and alienation from without or within (desires, projections, attachments, etc.). Swamiji loved to quote the sentence from the *Nārada-pārivrāja Up.* 12: "established in the contemplation of his own nature", *svārūpānusamdhāna-pūrvakam*,<sup>5</sup> which is the proper "occupation" of the Sannyāsi.

So these three are related: *samprasāda*, *paramjyoti* (the supreme light) and the revelation of the *svārūpa*, indeed they are three aspects of one and the same inner experience. "Arising out of the body" can, in Christian terms, be related to the Resurrection as well as the Ascension; in the Upanishadic context it refers to death as well as to the mystical experience as a kind of death-experience. The "rising out of the body" is well-known in Yoga and we need not go into the details of the yogic descriptions (hinted at by the term *sahasrāra* in Swamiji's text). As far as the mystical experience goes, we could also say with St Paul: "Whether with the body or without the body, I do not know, God only knows." Swamiji himself says: "He resumed his body—beyond this disjunction of the Purusha."

2.—Secondly, he identifies the Spirit of Jesus with the *sarvabhūta-antarātmā*, a favourite expression of the Upanishads: "The inner Self of all beings" (cf. Kaṭha V, 9-12, Muṇḍ. II, 1, 4)

3.—Thirdly, there is his realization of the truth of the Upanishads in the clearest possible terms. In the earlier years at Arunachala and Shantivanam we often find him expressing doubt: "If the Upanishads

4. Cf. M. MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v.

5. Cf. *The Further Shore*, p. 29.

are true," or "If Ramana Maharshi is true. . ." There follows then a deep crisis for his Christian faith and commitment. He is torn between not only "two loves", as he wrote in Pondicherry, but between "two truths". He very well knows that there cannot be *two* truths, that truth is really *advaita*, whatever its historical formulations may be. Here, on the other hand, we find the certainty of an experience which breaks through all the previous doubts and scruples.

4.—This certainty finds expression in the words of the rishi, which was Swamiji's favourite mantra: Śvetāśvatara Up. III, 8 (as quoted in the text above). This mantra, which comes originally from the Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā of the Yajurveda and is quoted in the Śvetāśvatara, can only be repeated by one who shares this experience of "I am" or "I know". Here Swamiji applies it to his own experience, which is again related to the vision of the "transfigured" Purusha of the Chāndogya, an image of the transfigured Christ and the Taboric light. In the Īśā it is the vision of the same Purusha "in yonder sun" which makes the dying man transcend darkness and death:

O Pūshan, sole seer, death, Sun,  
son of Prajāpati, shine forth.  
Concentrate your splendour that I may behold  
your most glorious form. He who is yonder—  
the Purusha yonder—I myself am he! (Īśa 16).

Here it does not take the form of "I know", but "I am he". When we know what the Upanishads mean by "knowledge", there is no contradiction between the two, for *ya evaṃ veda sa eva bhavati*, "whoever knows it thus (i.e., mystically), he becomes it." Knowing him, the Purusha of Light, means becoming Him: *so'ham asmi*.

5.—Then there follows an extraordinary sentence which again throws light on Swamiji's level of understanding: "The *mantras* in which the rishis have enshrined the experience, lest it should cause men to die at the time of this inner leap." Here he does not take *mantras* as steps to ascend the spiritual ladder, as it were, but as spiritual energy condensed in words, which are able to save the mystic from being drowned in his own experience. The precise experience to which he refers here is the "detachment" or "ascension" of the inner Purusha out of the body, to appear in his own light, as we have seen before, in other words "the absorption from above in the *sahasrāra*". This is an extremely dangerous moment, where the guru or the mantra is necessary to bring the person back to his body. The rishis, who have gone through such ecstatic experiences and have been able to express them in their mantras, are a sure guide. To discover the correspondence between one's own experience and the one enshrined

in the mantras is itself a kind of safety raft without which the ecstasy may lead to physical death or make a reintegration of consciousness impossible. The mantras are characterised by an extraordinary unity between subjective experience and objective truth, between personal and transpersonal reality, between consciousness or spirit and word (*mano-vāk-mithuna*). They are the fruit of the integration of *manas* and *vāk* for which the disciple prays in the *śāntimantra*: *vān me manasi*—"May my word be established in my mind, may my mind be established in my word. May the manifest (Brahman) be manifest to me." Thus the mantras, especially OM, help not only the *sādhaka* to ascend through the word to the wordless, as the Maitrī says (VI, 22), but also the mystic to "descend" from his ecstasy.

6.—In this whole passage Swamiji hints only at the Upanishadic context of the experience, which we have to supplement. Thus, after the reference to the Purusha who is *svaprakāśa*, "his own light", he refers to the steps of absorption in the Kāṭha (III, 13):

The wise man should surrender his words to his mind;  
and this he should surrender to the Knowing Self,  
the Knowing Self he should surrender to the Great Self  
and that he should surrender to the Peaceful Self.<sup>6</sup>

Swamiji presupposes this whole sequence and refers only to the last step, the attainment of the Peaceful Self (*śāntātmā*), whom he identifies again with the "transfigured" Purusha, *samprasāda*, of Chāndogya (VIII, 3,4). But let us try to understand the whole context: four times the same verbal root *yam-* is used to show a spiritual progression, and is here translated as "surrender". *yam-* is one of those Sanskrit verbs with an incredibly rich meaning. To quote only a few translations: to sustain, hold, support, raise, expand, restrain, subdue, control, offer, bestow, to give one's self up to, fix, establish. Out of this variety of meanings a translator like Hume has unfortunately chosen the English verb "to suppress", which has become a standard misunderstanding of Indian spirituality and especially of Yoga. Even the meanings "to raise or establish" could be applied, besides the one chosen in our translation, "to surrender". What is to be "surrendered" to what? Starting from word to mind, "restraining" or "offering" speech "in mind" (*vāgyamana*) refers to the ancient vedic spiritual practice of silence. But from the mental level, one has to rise to the level of the "knowing Self", *prajñāman*, which is the spiritual reality of man. Though this is a manifestation of the Ātman.

6. Translation from R. PANIKKAR et alii, *The Vedic Experience*, London, DLT 1977, p. 421.

yet it has to be raised or surrendered in the Great, universal Ātman, i.e., the cosmic presence of the Divine. But there is an even higher level (if the hierarchical term is not misunderstood) than the Ātman, and it is here called *śāntātmā*, the Self of Peace—we might say, the Divine or God.

After the two anthropological steps of speech and mind which are an essential part of every yoga or sādhanā, there are three levels or aspects of the Ātman—the sequence being based on a human approach: the human or knowledge-aspect, the cosmic, and the divine which is characterised by peace. This is a kind of trinity which R. Panikkar calls “cosmotheandric” and which represents the totality (*sarvam*). Not by chance the verse immediately following starts with the famous words: *uttisthata jāgrata prāpya varūn nibodhata*:

Arise! Awake! Seek to understand  
the favours you have won. The Sharpened edge  
of a razor is hard to cross—thus the sages  
declare the intricacies of the path. (Kāṭha III, 14)

This is a call to be awakened to this reality described in the previous verse. Swamiji adds: “from there alone peace radiates, peace is found.”

7—Then he describes this experience as one of Infinity (*ananta*), of totality (*sarvam*), which is like walking on a razor’s edge. Death is inevitable. Either he dies as a consequence of experiencing *ananta*, or he experiences *ananta* by dying mystically. Infinity does not leave room for the individual entity of man; he has to die.

In a kind of jump Swamiji moves from this death to a new birth: in Christian terms to the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father; in Hindu terms to the *hiranyagarbha* who is the seed of a new creation. The one who is born in this spiritual birth is himself Unborn, *aja*, the Ātman or the golden Puruṣa of the vision of the Śvetāśvatara.

What remains after the “explosion” or the mystical death, which is both individual and cosmic (“the end of the world”) is *I AM* (*aham asmi*). Here we are back to the ultimate Upanishadic intuition of *aham asmi*, which has been lived in our age by Ramana Maharshi. It is the same, pure I-consciousness which Jesus expresses when he says: “I AM”. This “I AM” is no longer subject to birth and death or history (“Before Abraham was, I AM”!).

This is indeed a shattering experience of light—that for which the prayer of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka longs, and which is Being and immortality: *asato mā sad gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya. OM śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*.

# Vedic Sacrifice

## Recent Studies and Theological Questions

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

THE ancient sacrificial system of India is an extraordinary phenomenon of human religiosity. No other liturgical tradition in the world is so variedly expressed or so well documented. Modern Indology gave a gasp of unbelief when in the 1860s Weber and Haug presented the first rather comprehensive account of sacrifice in the Vedas. However, although the topic has since then never been outside the scope of Indology, specially through the publication and translations of the various Brāhmaṇas and ritual sūtras, still one has the impression that the rich Indian liturgical tradition was underrated and only half-heartedly studied in the first half of this century. And yet, as L. Renou said already in 1951 speaking of Vedic studies, Vedic religion is "first and foremost a liturgy, and only secondarily a mythological or speculative system."<sup>1</sup> In the last few decades the situation has changed. There has been a remarkable output not only of editions and translations of primary sources, but also of in-depth studies. While reviewing a few books sent to us I take the occasion to mention some other significant studies that have come to my notice and to raise some theological questions which the topic suggests.

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By far the most impressive work under review is the magnificent production of F. Staal simply entitled *Agni*.<sup>2</sup> It is unfortunate that it will remain well beyond the economic possibilities of individuals and most libraries. *Agni* means not only fire, but also the Fire-God, the fire-ritual and the fire-altar. All these meanings are explored in

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1. *Religion in Ancient India* (Jordan Lectures 1951), Athlone Press 1953, quoted by Staal (see note 2) I, p. 1.

2. *Agni. The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*. Vol. 1, by Frits STAAL, in collaboration with C.V. SOMAYAJIPAD and M. Itti Raci NAMBU DIRI. Pp. xxxviii-716. Vol. 2, edited by Frits STAAL, with the assistance of Pamela MACFARLAND. Pp. xvii-832. Delhi . . . , Motilal Banarsidass, 1983. Rs. 2500 (inclusive of 2 cassettes). We have seen a review essay on this book, "Vedic Fieldwork", by Brian K. SMITH, in *Religious Studies Review* 11 (1985) pp. 136-145.

the work which is perhaps to date the most articulate exposition of Vedic sacrifice in general, even if its central theme is the *agnicayana* or the long and complex ceremony of "piling the fire (-altar)", an optional ritual in the ancient *Jyotiṣṭoma*. Unlike other works on Vedic questions, the approach of *Agni* is based as much on field-work as on the study of the literary sources. The heart of the book consists of a day-by-day and episode-by-episode description of the 12-day *atirātra* sacrifice, including the building of the five-layer altar (*agnicayana*), performed with much fanfare in Panjal, Kerala, from the 12th to the 24th April 1975. The description, which includes many of the texts used, in Sanskrit and in an English translation, is profusely illustrated and forms Part II of the work, pp. 191-702 of the first volume. Part I is an anthropological and sociological study of the meaning of the fire rituals and the fire myths of the ancient civilizations and also of the background to the *agnicayana* itself.

The second Volume contains Parts III-V, with much complementary material. Part III is made up of 22 articles by foremost scholars touching on many historical and structural aspects of the ritual. Part IV gives the sections of the Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra on *agnicayana* (pp. 478-675) in Sanskrit text and English translation, the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa section on the *atirātra* (478-675) only in translation, and the Jaiminīya Śrauta Sūtras on the *agnicayana*, with Bhavarātra's commentary (pp. 700-736), text in roman script, translation and notes. Finally Part V is a full account of the films, tapes and cassettes produced from the audiovisual material collected in 1975, namely a 45 minute 16 mm. colour film, *Altar of Fire* (available through the Extension Media Centre of the University of California, Berkeley), 80 hours of tape recordings and 2 cassettes of selections of these tapes, which are sold together with the book. The text and translation of the hymns in the cassettes is printed for us in Part V.

Volume I ends with a very useful bibliography on the ritual of India, to which must be added the specialised bibliographies of the essays in Part III. Volume II ends with the biodata of the 26 scholars who have contributed to the work, of whom 11 are Indians and the rest from various countries, specially Holland, the U.S.A., Canada and Japan. There are also 164 pages of indexes of terms, names and texts quoted.

This work takes us to the very heart of the Vedic tradition of which the core is not a book with a philosophy or a theology but ritual activity. "What counts are ancestors and teachers—hence



lineages, traditions, affiliations, cults, eligibility, initiation and injunction—concepts with ritual rather than truth-functional overtones.” (II, xix). Even in traditional understanding the Vedas consist primarily of the *vidhi*, the injunction. But with it there is also the *mantra*, for “pressed juices unaccompanied by sacred hymns have no effect” (RV 7.26.1).

In several places the book presents the view that the *agnicayana* ritual, of which the brick is the material element, is an Indian creation connected probably with the Harappan civilization that knew brick-production so well. The theory has been questioned because there is no obvious connection in the Harappan civilization between the bricks and the ritual. However, Asko Parpola argues the case well in his essay in Part II and proposes that there was a double immigration (not invasion) of Aryans from Central Asia into the Indian peninsula. In the first, shortly after 2000 BCE, the newcomers to the subcontinent met and blended with the local Dravidian culture to form the civilization which later the R̥gveda will call *dāsa*, characterised by Tantric elements, the Rudra-Prajāpati figure, the Śunahśepa legend, the Vṛātyas, etc. The influence of this culture survived in India and can be found in the oldest layers of the Epics. According to the author this *dāsa* civilisation spoke an Aryan language dialectically different from that of the R̥gveda. This was the civilisation met by the Aryans of the second immigration from around 1200 BCE onwards, who produced the Vedic culture we know from the Saṃhitās and the Sūtra literature, a syncretistic religion with a sacrificial system that includes the *agnicayana* and its brick-laying.<sup>3</sup>

Others essays in Part III give us soundings in the fire rituals found in Java and Bali, in Tibet and in Japan where the ‘Homa’ still forms an important part of popular religion. What we strangely miss is a good study of the relation of the Vedic sacrifice to the later

3. May I take this opportunity to draw the attention of readers in India to an interesting article of the same scholar, Asko PARPOLA, in *Studia Orientalia* (Helsinki), 50 (1980) pp. 195-213. In it the Finnish Indologist summarises his research on the origin and significance of the sacred syllable OM. Its early historical *locus* is clearly the Vedic ritual. Its original meaning is *yes*, often indicative of permission, and its prehistorical roots are, according to Parpola, to be sought in the Dravidian culture (cp. Tamil *ām* or *āmā* for *yes*). He thinks that the oldest religious use of the sacred syllable was connected with the cult of the rising sun. “I have given grounds for my basic working hypothesis according to which the Dravidian substratum is to be linked with the Harappan culture. Its tradition were transmitted to Vedic times by an earlier wave of non-Vedic Aryans, the *Dāsas* and *Vṛātyas*” (p. 210). If correct, the hypothesis complements and somewhat corrects my ideas on “A Controversial Syllable” in VIDYAJYOTI 45 (1981) 232-238, when I was not aware of this research. Cf. also VIDYAJYOTI 46 (1982) 546-549.

sacrificial and ritual practices of India, including the *pūjā* with its use of fire (besides flowers, etc.).

Several of the essays of Part III concentrate on the study of the remnants of the Vedic sacrificial practices in present-day India. More than 500 performances have been recorded in relatively recent times mostly in "isolated corners of peninsular India." These are genuine survivals of our ancient civilization—not unlike the living fossils witnesses in our world of an older stage in the evolution of life. This part contains also popular studies on the history of Kerala and of the Nambudiris. Staal insists, even in Part I, that the 1975 performance was not revivalist, i.e., the outcome of an effort of scholars and pandits to resuscitate a lost tradition with the help of extant texts. It was rather traditional, even if the performance was inspired patronised and indeed partly financed by foreign universities and research centers. It was a "normal" performance of the unbroken, though not unchanged, tradition of the Nambudiris. Part III surveys also other areas where similar traditions are still alive, specially in Andhra, Tamilnadu and Kerala.

The Vedic sacrificial system is a culture fast disappearing ("each time one of the older Vedic ritualists dies, a portion of the 3,000-year-old tradition is irretrievably lost" (Vol. I, 9). One may be tempted to dismiss it as no more relevant to our computer age than the fossils we keep in our museums. But what is astonishing is that it has survived all these millenia on the basis not of printed text editions but of local *prayoga* manuals passed on from generation to generation. Whatever value judgement one passes on this ancient ritualistic tradition, it is clear that it was the heart of the ancient Vedic culture from which many later developments, including geometry, mathematics and many elements of the "little tradition", derive. A. Seidenberg can go so far as to claim that "there are reasons for thinking that many ancient secular activities, perhaps all (except those shared with the apes) arise from the ritual" (II, 108).

The book is therefore of great interest to the historian of Indian culture. Indeed not only Vedic culture in the strict sense, but many parts of the Upaniṣads cannot be understood without reference to Vedic and Brahmanic ritual categories and practices. The commentaries on the Upaniṣads will have to be re-written in the measure in which we discover the ritual world undergirding them.<sup>4</sup>

4. This is not only true of such ancient texts as the *Bṛhad Aranyaka* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*, but even of much later texts like the *Maitri* or *Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad*. For M.U. 6:26-27 cf J.A.B. VAN BUITENEN, *The Maitrāyaṇīya*

The theologian will also find matter in the rich material offered here for a synthesis of the meaning of sacrifice in Hinduism and for a general theory of sacrifice. Perhaps we find the greatest weakness of the book in this area. While its recording of the data is precious and its historical research challenging and such that it opens new vistas, the work is guided by a certain phenomenological approach of which the central affirmation is "the meaninglessness of the ritual."<sup>5</sup> This is an idea that Staal has been defending for years,<sup>6</sup> and it somehow does influence his presentation of the collected material. According to him the ritual is not symbolic: it does not refer to something else. It is an activity whose explanation is in itself. "This ritual is self-contained and self-absorbed."<sup>7</sup> Like music and dance, it is done for its own sake, and thus there is no symbolic meaning going on in the minds of the performers who simply do the action because it is prescribed. But "to say that ritual is for its own sake is to say that it is meaningless, without function, aim or goal, or also that it constitutes its own aim or goal. It does not follow that it has no value: but whatever value it has is intrinsic value."<sup>8</sup> The "meaning" given to a ritual is something added to it later by a process of rationalisation.

I think that this contention could be challenged with strong evidence from Indian and other ritual traditions. Indeed, it is not clear to me what Staal actually says, but none of the possible meanings of his words seems to me to be so obviously evident, as he so confidently assumes.

There is one point in his introductory essay to which he alludes more than once and which bears a different explanation from the one he gives. He mentions that the Śrauta Sūtras define the sacrifice as constituted by *dravya* (a substance), *devatā* (a deity) and *tyāga* (a renunciation), which he explains as "renunciation of the fruits of the ritual acts." Now, according to him, this is incompatible with the stock example of the Mīmāṃsakas, *agniṣṭomena svargakāmo yajeta*

*Upaniṣad*, 's-Gravenhage, Moutton and Co., 1962 and Mlle ESNOUL, *Maitry-Upaniṣad*, Paris, Arien-Maisonneuve, 1952. I myself made abundant use of the ritual world-view for my study of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad 2 and 3 in *Bliss in the Upanishads*, New Delhi, Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1977.

5. This is the title of an article of Frits (J.F.) STAAL in *Numen* 26 (1979) 2-22. (Quoted below as *Numen*). Staal's view seems to echo the position of Kautsa as reported in YASKA's *Nirukti*, around the 5th cent. BCE.

6. He has articulated it in the Professor P.D. Gune Memorial Lectures, which were delivered in Pune, July 1981 and published as *The Science of Ritual* Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1982 STAAL repeats his philosophy of ritual in his essay in Part I and alludes to it in other places of this work.

7. *Numen*, 3.

8. *Ibid.*, 9.

(he who *desires* heaven has to sacrifice with the Agniṣṭoma ritual): but "this fruit is renounced whenever the yajamāna utters the *tyāga* formula of renunciation. The effect, therefore, is not obtained."<sup>9</sup> In my opinion, this is not the correct interpretation of *tyāga* in the ritual context, but an interpretation done under the influence of the later Gītā philosophy. In the sacrifice the sacrificer renounces not the *fruit* of the sacrifice, but the *dravya*, or material substance, in favour of the *devatā*. This is the obvious meaning of the old theology. Whether the later philosophy of action without seeking its fruit as found in the Gītā implies a contradiction is a matter to be studied by itself but one that throws no light on the theology of the Mīmāṃsakas or of earlier sacrificial literature.

It is perhaps because of the influence of the "phenomenologist" a priori that there is in Volume I little effort to understand the *yajña* as a whole, to see it not merely as a succession of ritual activities (where all the details are given the same importance), but as a performance with an articulated meaning inherent in it (literally, a *sensus textus*), whether the performing priests are aware of it or not. In this Vesci's book, which we shall now analyse scores over Staal's. Let me add that in spite of its obvious scholarly standards, the presentation of the Vedic sacrifice in Staal's book is such as to be accessible even to scholars not specialised in Indian culture.

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Ms Uma Vesci has spent more than 20 years in India studying the Vedic concept of heat specially, though not exclusively, as expressed by the word *tapas*. In her new book<sup>10</sup> she gives us the mature result of her long study which she promises to complete by another study on the effects of the excess of heat and the absence of heat. *Tapas* is surely one of the matrix concepts of the Indian tradition, from the early Vedic times to our own day, and it has quite a variety of related meanings.

Vesci studies the concept at its origin, concretely in the Vedic sacrificial theology. She starts by noting that unlike other cultures Vedic India requires the sacrificial offerings to be *cooked* before they are offered, even if they had to be offered to the sacrificial Fire. (This explains the plurality of fires in the sacrificial ground.) Why is this

9. Vol. 1. 5,

10. *Heat and Sacrifice in the Vedas*. By Uma Marina Vesci, Delhi... Motilal Banarstdass, 1985. Pp xviii-339, Rs 100.

so? The investigation leads her to an analysis of heat and its function: when properly used, without excess or deficiency, heat is an agent of purification and transformation and thus gives both the victim and the sacrificer the power to ascend to the heavenly order. *Tapas* thus confers immortality.

After an introductory chapter situating the problem, the author studies the concept of heat as a transforming agent in the *R̥gveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, the *Yajurveda* and its *Brāhmaṇas*—in this order. The second part of the book contains also four chapters where important ancient rituals are described and analysed from the point of view of the meaning of the action of heating/cooking. The four rituals are the *paśuyajña* (animal sacrifice), the *agnyādḥāna* (kindling of the first fire), the *agnicayana* and the *pravargya* (heating and offering of a special vessel full of ghee).

Vesci does not give us only an analysis of a concept. She gives a theology of the Vedic sacrifice as found in the texts, from the point of view of heat and fire. When needed, she avails herself of elements from comparative religion in which she is well qualified, having done her earlier research into Greek religion and the axial period of the 6th century BCE from China to Europe. She is, of course, well acquainted with the Judeo-Christian tradition and does not hesitate to establish comparisons where useful. She believes that such a comparative approach enables us to understand the "syntax of the sacrifice"<sup>11</sup> which itself helps us to interpret the Indian texts. Of course there is in this process an element of personal perception of the significance of the various types of religion and of various rites that need not impose itself on all readers. But her conclusions are certainly linked to a careful analysis of the texts and the rites.

The last part of the book is of a more philosophical nature: the transformation of the Divine and the transformation of man in Brahmanic cosmology. She wants to show how the passage from Vedic religion to the *Upaniṣads* passes through the sacrificial theology of the *Brāhmaṇas*. In this conclusion, specially, she takes up the themes developed in an earlier study of hers on *kaḥ* (—"Who?") as a name of God.

The thesis is clearly for specialised Indologists. It gives an insight not only into the concept of *tapas* in its early stage but also into

11. F. STAAL also uses the expression "Ritual Syntax" as the title of his contribution to M. NAGATOMI, B.K. MATILAL, J.M. MASSON and E. DIMOCK (eds.), *Sanskrit and Indian Studies*, Dordrecht (Holland), D. Reidel Publishing Company 1979, pp. 119-142.

the significance of the Vedic ritual. The analysis of the ritual and the texts of the Brāhmaṇas may be taxing, but it builds up a consistent and convincing picture. We are looking forward to the second part of the study.

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Before passing on to the last book I have to review I would like to mention a number of important works on Vedic sacrifice published in the last two decades. I start with the French work, *Le sacrifice dans l'Inde ancienne*, by Madeleine Biardeau and Charles Malamoud (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France 1976). Biardeau analyses the cosmic and individual significance of the sacrifice in the Vedic period, the significance of its renunciation in the religion of the renouncers, and its new presence in the bhakti period. She seeks in the sacrifice a key to discover the fundamental unity in Hindu tradition, in spite of the diversification of its role through the various periods. In the same book Malamoud studies the place of *dakṣiṇā* (stole fees) in the sacrificial system.

D.M. Knipe's book, *In the Image of Fire, The Vedic Experience of Heat* (Delhi, 1975) takes the same topic as Vesci, but his study is not so much based on an analysis of the ritual as on general world views.

1975 saw also the publication of H. Aguilar's *The Sacrifice in the R̥gveda: Doctrinal Aspects* which tries to bring out better than K.R. Potdar did in 1953, the Vedic theology of sacrifice—"The Navel of the World." This book can be complemented by *The Sacrificial Ritual in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* by Naama Drury (Delhi, 1981).

Finally, there are some studies specialising in concrete rituals: the lamented J.A.B. van Buitenen's *Pravargya: An Ancient Indian Iconic Ritual Described and Annotated* (Pune, Deccan College 1968) deals, like *Agni*, with a subordinate but important and interesting ritual, which is studied also by Vesci. van Buitenen's book is partly based on the Vājapeya ritual performed in Pune in 1959. More recently we have V.V. Bhide's *The Cāturmāsya Sacrifices* (Pune, University of Poona, 1979) and Urmila Rustagi's *Darśapūrṇamāsa: A Comparative Ritualistic Study* (Delhi, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1981). This is not a place to give information about the various editions and translations of the kalpa sūtra literature. Indologists are aware of them. Jan Gonda's survey entitled *The Ritual Sūtras* (Wiesbaden, O. Harrassowitz 1977) deserves, however, a mention.

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The last book received for review is a comparative study.<sup>12</sup> The topic taken by Thachil for his doctoral thesis at the BHU, Varanasi, is of great interest and promise. It is a pity that much of the book contributes only indirectly to the topic of Vedic sacrifice (his references go down to Chaitanya and the modern period). The first four chapters deal with the Vedic data: first the evidence found in Vedic literature itself, followed by a short study of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā theology, and a third chapter on the Upaniṣads and the later tradition. The fourth chapter deals with various kinds of sacrifices found in Vedic literature, the ancillary rites and the personnel involved. The stress is on information rather than insight. The information, derived both from primary and secondary sources, is quite rich as the more than two thousand footnotes prove. The last three chapters of the book deal with the biblical doctrine of sacrifice, the Catholic theology, atonement and the Eucharist, and a comparative study of the similarities and dissimilarities between the Vedic and Christian traditions on sacrifice. To summarise in the author's own exact words: "The similarities are mainly based on: (a) supra-temporal dimension of sacrifice, (b) the gift aspect of sacrifice, (c) the aim of sacrifice and (d) the efficacy of sacrifice to remit sins. The differences are mainly on the basis of: (a) the consignee of sacrifice, (b) the motivation for offering sacrifice, (c) the number of sacrifices, (d) the mode of performing sacrifice, and (e) the priest offering sacrifice" (350). A promising parallelism between Agni and Jesus Christ is timidly suggested on the same page.

There are some affirmations in the thesis that would need more explanation. Though sacrifice may be "the deepest and most common expression of man's relation to the Infinite" (p. 4) one should not forget the Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and even some forms of Protestantism are rather allergic to the idea and practice of sacrifice. The alleged simplicity of the early Vedic ritual is quite relative if we take into consideration all the data found in the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā, even if one can guess from such data that there was an earlier *pre-Vedic* simpler form. That knowledge alone is the means of salvation is a view that cannot be attributed to all Vedānta ācāryas (p. 114)—certainly not to Rāmānuja. The sacrifice of Isaac is related to the sacrifice of Christ in Patristic, not in Biblical literature (p. 253). We regret that the Mīmāṃsaka theology of sacrifice is not studied in

12. *The Vedic and Christian Concept of Sacrifice*. By JOSE THACHIL, *Alwaye, Institute of Theology and Philosophy* 1985. Pp: xxii-364-xxxii. Rs 50. US \$ 12 (cloth), Rs 45, us \$ 10 (paper).

depth, while a lot of other information about the system is given to us.

The proof-reading is below standard (one example only: *agnicayana* is quite often misspelt as *agnisayana*). In short, I find that the book fails to do justice to a very important topic, and in a sense seems to strangely fulfil the disturbing prophecy contained in the misprinting of Kipling's saying, "... and never the train shall meet" (xv)!

\*

At the end of this survey I would like to raise some theological questions that occurred to me while reading these books, without however attempting to answer them. One might first think that the interest in rituals cultivated and preserved through millenia by a small elite is of little interest to the theologian today, specially if one considers oneself socially committed. And it is true that our attitude to rituals has changed considerably, and that the rites themselves are today different. But, *pace* Staal, rituals are powerful symbols and have a meaning that leads to action. Much of our everyday language, including political language, is suffused with sacrificial categories and symbols. One need not go back to Vinoba Bhave to confirm this. Hence the theologian has to ask what this ancient symbol means today and how is it translated into our cultures.

Sacrifice is a religious category that appears in different forms in many, though not in all, religions. In the Christian tradition it occurs not only as a necessary part of the study of the Old Testament, but also as a key category in the interpretation of the death of Christ and, for Catholics at least, in the understanding of the Eucharist.

The question that must be raised therefore is, whence does this theological category arise? Is it from the Old Testament only? Or is it to be taken as a universal category? Has the concept of sacrifice a uniform or even an analogical meaning in the various religious traditions? Has it a fixed content in Christian theology and what is it? Is not a comparative study of the concept a necessary presupposition for any theological reflection using it? But has the work of Hubert and Mauss in 1899, *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice* found any place in our theological libraries? Has the interest in the study of sacrifice shown by the faculties of humanities in many



universities even today had any impact on our theological Faculties?<sup>13</sup> Has the work of Renè Girard been taken seriously in theology?<sup>14</sup>

For an Indian theology a question that arises is first whether the translation of as *yajña/yāga* as "sacrifice" is correct. Staal often translates the words as "rituals". Is this due to his a priori? A second question is, has the rich literature on and the practice of sacrifice in the various religious traditions of India anything to offer to a Christian theology? For instance, there is, according to Staal, an intimate connection between the sacrificial ground and the battle-field: the ritual enacts a real struggle. It represents the great battle between the devas and the asuras. The sacrifice is not merely violence (à la Girardi): it is a violence for a just order. Would this not be a way of looking at the sacrifice of Christ "outside the camp", in terms of a cosmic and bloody battle against the prince of this world (Jn 14:31)? Is Christ's *agon* (his "fight", from which word the "agony" derives) not the very essence of the meaning of his passion and therefore of the Eucharist itself? And what impact an agonistic sacrificial theology would have on our Eucharistic thinking and piety, normally oozing with a soft, innocuous and anodyne spirituality? Would it influence even the way of celebrating the Mass?

The Vedic sacrifice also recalls the work of Creation as God's own *primaeva* sacrifice, by a consistent reference to the *Puruṣa-sūkta* hymn in R̥gveda X.90. We have ourselves no liturgical celebration of creation (apart from a reference to it in the readings of the Paschal Vigil). Could this be perhaps a fruitful field for Indian liturgy and theology to explore?

The homology established in the Veda between Agni and the ātman (Staal, II, 17) could perhaps give us a starting-point for a reflection on the Spirit in the sacrifice of Christ and its role in the Eucharist, a theme of ecumenical importance.

But, at the end, a more fundamental question must be raised. It is this: is the concept of sacrifice normative for Christian theology, i.e., for the articulation of our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus and its saving effect, and for the theology of the Eucharist? Or is it

13. Just to mention two examples: the book of M. Biarreau (with C. Malamoud) mentioned earlier is based on lectures on the theme of Sacrifice in a Seminar given at the Sorbonne University of Paris. The book *Sacrifice*, edited by M.F.C. BOURDILLON and Meyer FORTES, London, Academic Press 1980, is the result of a conference on sacrifice held in Windsor, England, in 1979.

14. For a recent survey see R. NORTH, "Violence and the Bible: The Girard Connection" in *CBQ* 47 (1985) 1-27, Notes 86 to 88 of this article, on pp. 18-19, give a rather extensive survey on recent theological literature on sacrifice.

one ancient way of explaining the realities of God's saving action, no longer viable or useful in our demythologised age? Will Christology and Sacramentology lose anything vital if we simply jettison the sacrificial concepts and articulate our faith in different categories? Has our understanding of God been so changed (refined?) that sacrifice is no longer a useful category? Why is it that the death of Christ on the cross is seen by traditional theology as the sacrifice that terminates all sacrifices? Is this an indication that with the revelation of God in Christ we have passed from the world where sacrifice was meaningful and been transferred into the new Kingdom of Light? Or, on the contrary, will our theology of sacrifice revive and be enriched by a serious dialogue with the sacrificial traditions of other religions, of which the Vedic sacrifice is the foremost example? Such questions will surely be in the minds of Indian theologians, while reading the recent research on the sacrificial traditions of our country.

G. GISPERT-Sauch, S.J.

(Contd. from page 500)

The book begins as an essay in inter-religious dialogue, but imperceptibly moves towards the theme of liberation, showing that today religious discourse is closely linked with human liberation.

This stimulating work by an author, already known for his *Third-Eye Theology*, makes absorbing reading. Not all might agree with his interpretation, for instance, of the Tower of Babel, but he presents his thought in a persuasive way.

G. LOBO, S.J.

Le Consolateur. Esprit-Saint et vie de Grace. By Louis BOUYER. Paris, Cerf, 1980. Pp 471. N.p.

This immensely rich volume is the final volume of a trilogy in which the author has studied *The Eternal Son* (1973), *The Invisible Father* (1976) and *The Holy Spirit*. The study is divided into two parts. In the fifteen chapters

of the first part the author traces the history of the reflection and experience of the Spirit from the indications of the Spirit in ancient Chinese, Indian and Greek religious traditions, through the OT, the Gospels, other NT writings and the theologies of the NT up until the Middle Ages, in the Eastern and Western tradition and their conflicts. The major part of the historical study is related to the experience of great saints, martyrs and mystics. The chapters of this section with their detailed subdivisions provide a treasure of theological information.

The second part entitled *Anticipations* is a theological study of a variety of aspects of the reality of the action of the Holy Spirit, including the Epiclesis, varieties of inspiration, the gifts of the Spirit, Agape and Wisdom and the Eucharist. This volume reflects the erudition and spiritual depth of the author.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

# Correspondence

## Plea for a Popular Liturgy

Dear Editor,

Father George Lobo has well presented the problem of communalism in the Church in India. While I agree with the author in the general trend of the article, I feel, a particular statement, "But the nostalgia for Latin, Gregorian chant and the like is still there in some quarters" (p. 231), calls for some comment. Why this nostalgia for things outlandish? It shows that at least some people are not satisfied with the post-Vatican liturgy. This phenomenon needs investigation.

As a village Pastor I have neither the erudition nor the expertise to delve deep into this matter; but I would like to share a few points with Father Lobo and the readers of *Vidyayoti*. The pre-Vatican Liturgy was in Latin: the post-Vatican Liturgy is Greek to many. (I limit myself to the Hindi speaking areas). The Hindi language used in the Missal, Lectionary and Ritual is jaw-breaking, and in most part goes above the heads of the listeners. Very often neither the reader nor the listeners understand what is being read. Our Catechist (a Junior High School pass) is unable to pronounce at least half a dozen words in an ordinary day's reading. (For most of the people of my Parish Lucknow is Naklow, matlab is matbal, nuks is nushk, etc). The Priest announcing the Gospel and preaching the homily, in most cases is a *deshi foreigner* like myself. . . . Confusion confounded! So, to an ordinary illiterate or semi-literate church goer, the Hindi Liturgy is still Greek!

Coming to the question of the Gregorian chant: even after 20 years of Vatican II, I am yet to hear a village congregation rightly singing the *Tantum Ergo* in Hindi! Do we not recall with what gusto people used to sing Latin hymns without even understanding a word of it! And the young and old who recited the Rosary through the Latin Mass went home with the satisfaction of having prayed—literally the "bis orat" of St Augustine. Today? In spite of having so many hymnals and hymns in Hindi, hardly anyone is suitable for congregational singing. Hindi hymns, composed by persons from outside this region and recorded with a plethora of instruments, again go above the heads of the ordinary worshipper!

The remedy is *not* to put the clock back. The clock must move forward and this forward movement must be made sensible to the worshipping community. It is here that the post-Vatican liturgists have failed. In recent years, in this land alone, thousands (if not lakhs) of people have left the Catholic fold and have joined the new evangelical groups, to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth and to listen to some intelligent preaching.

Still there is time to make the liturgy more intelligent to the ordinary worshipper by adopting a simpler language, by having hymns in *log geet* style, more relevant readings and intelligent homilies. Then the nostalgia for the past may be turned into a longing for the present.

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# Book Reviews

## Scriptural Source Books

**The New Jerusalem Bible.** General Editor: Henry WANSBROUGH. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985. Pp. xv-2109, with 7 Maps and Index. £25.

We shall make several types of observations about this excellent Bible translation. The original JB (1966) was a translation of the French *La Bible de Jerusalem* (1961). In 1973 a new edition of *La Bible de Jerusalem* was published which incorporated the subsequent progress in biblical studies. This event, the criticisms of the earlier JB translation, and the fact that the English edition was allowed to add even more recent biblical knowledge led to the *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) which is essentially a *Study Bible*.

The format is the same: Introductions to groups of books, the translated Text, and comments through abundant theological, thematic and critical Notes. Supplementary information is given at the end. The jacket and the hard cover are exactly like the original JB, except for the important word 'New' in the title.

Looking at the *Supplements* we see that the *Chronological Table* has been increased by the inclusion of more information under the sections "The Beginnings", "The Patriarchs" and the "Maccabean Period", while some changes have been made in the period after Jesus' death, besides other minor changes in dates. There has been no revision of Pauline chronology after 45 A.D. There are minor changes in *The Calendar and Tables of Measures and Money*. The *Index of Biblical Themes*, i.e., the index of the Notes to the translated Text, has been completely revised; only major Notes are included but each key thematic term is sub-divided into related themes. This makes the Index easier to use and more useful. If carefully used, the Index can lead to building up a whole biblical theology and offer much matter for talks. A separate *Index of Persons* has been added. The former Maps have been replaced by 7 new

coloured maps. The maps of Jerusalem include the results of more recent excavations and study. I would have preferred an updating of the maps in the JB which were good. The maps of Palestine of the OT/NT are easier to read and less cluttered. The tints which indicate attitude are less pronounced. On the whole, these maps are better and a useful index has been added.

The *Notes*, for which the JB justifiably famous and which are scholarly, informative and substantial, have been modified, reworked or considerably enlarged. New Notes have been added where required by recent study. The quality has so been heightened as to make the NJB an unique English translation and an excellent Study Bible. Each group of books has an adequate *Introduction*. These have been reworked, though not very radically. There are changes in the discussion of the sources of the *Pentateuch*—the Hexateuch/Tetrateuch hypotheses—and in the date of the Exodus. Aspects of the discussion on the Codes of the Covenant have been developed and changed. Only minimal changes have been made to the religious significance of these books. The introduction to *Joshua-2 Kings* has been both nuanced and expanded with further information on Joshua and Judges. Modifications have been made in the areas of history, sources and the Deuteronomistic influence. For *Chronicles-Nehemiah* the importance of the Temple has been more clearly underlined and some parts have been re-ordered and rewritten with more information. A noticeable change in the introduction to *Tobit* is the later date and the change of the place of origin, while *Judith* is dated earlier. The relationship of *I and II Maccabees* is treated more fully, and information is added about the chronological system followed in the books and about the ancient texts we possess.

The general introduction to the *Wisdom Books* and the individual books been modified with additional information and a more careful description of what is to be called "Messianic" in reference to the Psalms. The introduction to the *Song of Songs* has been radi-

cally rewritten, the literal interpretation is accepted and information on its origin, nature, date and place of origin is added. The rich general introduction to the *Prophets* has one major modification. The section which was entitled "Messianism" is now named "Future Salvation" and the way of describing the "Messianic" has been again rightly altered. We may note that the NJB is less "confessional" and more respectful of the OT as a true part of the integral Word of God. The introduction to *Isalah* has shaken off any shadows of early Catholic hesitation and been rewritten. The origin and evolution of the three major parts of the book are described in detail. In the other introductions to the prophetic books the changes are usually related to date, mode of composition, the question of later additions and the choice of the historical context. Valuable additions have been made to *Daniel*.

The introduction to the *Synoptic Gospels* reflects a greater awareness of the complexity of sources and the formation of the written Gospel. The discussion of authorship is more nuanced. In the discussion of the individual Gospels we find minor changes. The outline of *John* is changed, and the theories about the process of evolution of this Gospel have modified the discussion of its authorship and the description of its sources. The nuanced opinion about the author has led to changes in the comments on the Letters of John. In the introduction to *Acts* the discussion of literary forms and history is more sophisticated. The introduction to *Paul* and his Letters is remarkably unchanged. Some modifications have been made to *Philippians* and the question of the authorship of *Eph*, *Col*, *Timothy* and *Titus* reflects more recent opinions. I would have preferred to have Hebrews treated separately. The problem of the authorship of *James* is developed more at length and the description of the sources of *Revelation* has been rewritten.

In general, the Introductions are very informative and reflect contemporary common scholarship. Their format has been altered so that they read more easily. The major drawback even in a Study Bible, is that the lengthy attention given to aspects of the historical-critical approach results at times in insufficient emphasis been given to the final text and its meaning. Also, at some point in the translation the questions and problems connected with the contemporary interpretation of the Word could have been

treated so as to guide the reader to hear the Word in today's world.

The *Translation* has been revised. Unnecessary masculine language and pejorative terms have been carefully avoided. The same major words/phrases in the original texts have been consistently translated with the same English words/phrases where this means being true to the original texts. Parallel texts as we find, for example, in the Synoptic Gospels are translated to indicate the similarities and differences. The translation has not been changed where the JB translation was true to the meaning of the original. However, the major criticism of the JB was that it was too dependent on the French translation to the detriment of the meaning of the original. This translation has been made directly from the original texts and so there are changes. The translation has, however, normally preserved the options made in the 1973 Bible de Jerusalem where texts admit of a variety of interpretations. In the cases I checked the translation is consistently accurate, and paraphrasing of the original consistently avoided. The English flows and is lively. The translators have wished to preserve the dignity of the original, avoid the colloquial and have kept in mind the widespread liturgical use of this translation.

The New Jerusalem Bible is pre-eminently a Study Bible. The excellence and accuracy of the Translation (rated by Duthie as the best, with the GNB, from the point of its "conveying the full meaning of the original to the widest audience of English speakers today"), the quality of the Introductions, the abundance and richness of the Notes, the copious cross references, the attractive format and valuable maps make this Bible unique in the English-speaking world. The NJB is a very rich mine of biblical knowledge and formation for the Christian—lay, religious or priest. The quality of priestly ministry of the Word would improve if more priests would use this translation. This would be more profitable than adapting Barclay's interpretation.

Though the NJB is expensive, I would recommend that it become a text book of students for the priesthood, and that copies be available in Christian libraries and in all religious houses where English is known, and that religious men and women interested in Scripture be allowed to have a personal copy. The JB translation of the NT or the Bible without the

Notes and Introductions is not worth the extra expense. The full NJB is a most valuable investment for all.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.** Edited by G. Johannes BOTTERWECK and Helmer RINGGREN. Translated by David E. GREEN. Vol V. *Grand Rapids, W.E. Eerdmans*, 1986. Pp. xxi-521. \$ 27.50.

We introduce this work (TDOT) to some of our readers who may not know of its existence. The present volume is part of a multi-volume reference work which will parallel Kittel-Friedrich's TDNT, though less atomistic and philological. The articles are marked by the awareness that the meaning of words is deeply related to the context, the chosen mode of communication and its history. The present volume covers the Hebrew words from *hmr* to *ywhh*. The original was written in German and its publication began in 1970 in fascicles. The present volume is the translation of the German Vol. 3, fascicles 1-4 (1977-1980). The earlier translated volumes appeared in 1974 (Vol 1) and 1975 (Vol 2) both revised in 1977; 1978 (Vol 3) and 1980 (Vol 4). The list of contributors is no less impressive in the present than in the earlier volumes. Though a majority of these contributors are German-speaking scholars, yet each volume includes major articles by Jewish, French, Scandinavian, East European, English and North American scholars. This assures both the quality of the articles and a diversity rising from the different confessional and cultural backgrounds. I have not seen as yet any Spanish scholars included nor anyone from the South American, Asian or African worlds. Some richness must be lacking because of this omission. More contributors from the English-speaking world would balance the German approach in a dictionary which wants to be international and serve many generations.

The dictionary is very easy to use, well presented with no text cramping, and with abundant bibliographic references. Normally, each article begins with the discussion of the etymology of the root, and where relevant, a brief study of occurrences in other Oriental Semitic languages, including the LXX and Qumran. The body of the article is devoted to the biblical meaning, the pre-

dominant weight being given to the theological significance, though not to the detriment of everyday usage, and the significance in related languages and cultures. The summaries at the end of parts or the full article enhance the usefulness. Non-specialists will appreciate these.

At first glance, this dictionary seems to be only for scholars. However the English translation is meant for serious students of the Bible at graduate levels. One suggestion I would like to make is that, for the benefit of those who do not know Hebrew, the major English meaning of the root be included in the initial table of contents and at the beginning of each article, along with the Hebrew root, its transliteration and the groups of words included in the article. The dictionary is such that students who know elementary Hebrew, or even no Hebrew, can derive much benefit from it.

The non-specialists students can omit sections of articles irrelevant for them (the initial table of contents of each article will help them to pick and choose) and yet broaden and enrich their knowledge of the theology and meaning of the OT. Important words in foreign languages and biblical texts are often translated. The non-specialist will at times be frustrated when grammatical points are being explained or phrases re-appear without translation, or when philology is discussed. We do not pretend that the dictionary is easy for non-specialists who do not know elementary Hebrew. But teachers and lecturers can help graduates to derive much from these volumes.

This volume includes some major articles as: *hānan/hen* (be gracious-favour), *hesed* (mercy), *haram* (consecrate to destruction), *hāsāk* (darkness), *tob* (good), *yād* (hand), *yāh* (praise-confess), *hog* (command-ordinance) and *ywhh* (Yahweh).

This is an essential reference book and must find a place in any theological faculty. Institutes of theology with good libraries ought to have it, for it will be the standard reference for any scientific work on the OT. We would also expect to find this multi-volume work in University libraries which have a department of comparative religion.

P.M. MEAGHER

**The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.** General Editor Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Volume Three K-P. *Grand Rapids, W.B. Eerdmans*, 1986. Pp. xix-1060. \$ 37.50.

This is the *fully revised* ISBE (original 1915-1929) and shall be in four volumes. Vol. I and II were published in 1979 (pp. 1006 with 26 excellent maps) and 1982 (pp. 1175) respectively. Many Catholic students of the Bible may not know of this encyclopedia. While TDOT is for specialised work, this is of general interest. The work is marked by fine contemporary scholarship and an adequate treatment of a comprehensive choice of subjects. It is more conservative and evangelical in approach than the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible and Supplement* (IDB). A notable feature is the addition of historical surveys of theological development of some topics so that at times this is a biblical and theological encyclopedia (cf., e.g., the articles on the Person of Jesus Christ, Mary, Last Supper, Inspiration...). There are new and adequate maps and illustrations, though the BW photos are dull. The presentation in double columns is well done, the print not too small, and sufficient cross references to other articles are included.

This volume was published in 1986 though the bibliography at the end of the longer articles indicates that many were completed in the 70s or may be earlier, and bibliographic material from the late 70s and early 1980s is scant. In some major studies this could have been rectified. In the Preface to Vol. I the editor explains the reasons for the delay in publication and the prolonged period of the project.

This is a genuine Encyclopedia and as such an extensive range of subject matter has been included which is related to the study and understanding of the Bible and its exposition. The variety of authors brings out both the international and interdenominational character of the project, though the inclusion of some more noted Catholic writers would have been advisable. The RSV text is usually used. There are no indices, but this does not seriously lessen the utility of the Encyclopedia. Each volume has a trans-literation scheme and pronunciation key as well as its own list of contributors and abbreviations.

With regard to the content we shall

make some remarks about some of the articles. There are notable articles on the Person of Christ (pp 781-801), the Pentateuch, Palestine, Parable, Paul and Pauline Theology, Parousia, the Bible as Literature, Music, 'Now', Miracle, Messiah, Library, each of the Synoptics Gospels, Law in the OT/NT, Life, the Lord's Supper, Maccabees (book of), Magic, Mary, Moses...

Some of the shortcomings noted would be: the lack of the influence of the South American interpretation of Scripture (though see the articles on *Poor and Oppression*); the article on the Kingdom of God is basically pre-1970; the lack of adequate treatment of Lucan theology and the absence of the theme of 'understanding-misunderstanding' in Marcan theology; a misrepresentation of normal Catholic theological teaching about Mary's virginity and the solution given to the question of perpetual virginity is beyond the evidence of the texts; Bruce's personal understanding of Paul is too pronounced for a dictionary article which needs to be more informative of many points of view; Rom 7:9ff is read autobiographically in two articles; more attention could be given to the new interpretation of the parables; the lack of balance in the amount of space given to introductory disputed questions in articles on biblical books, e.g., the authorship of the pastorals, 1 Peter...; the acceptance of "Son of Man" as a Messianic Jewish title and other aspects of the article on Messiah are questionable; the influence of Sanders, Beker, Ludemann, Raisanen, M. Hooker... is not seen in articles which include aspects of Paul's thought.

Though in the theological and more strictly biblical articles a conservative and evangelical tendency dominates, with a "reverent criticism", yet other points of view are normally adequately presented and a healthy diversity of opinions, attitudes and decisions are found in articles which overlap and come from different contributors. We also notice a difference between articles which were written nearly 20 years ago and those more recently completed. A new spirit can be seen, reflecting a greater convergence of attitudes among centre-of-the-road scholars of all denominations.

We hope four years do not elapse before Vol. 4 appears. This biblical Encyclopedia has a honoured place in every good theological library. Larger parish

libraries, central libraries of religious congregations and House of Studies ought to have at least either ISBE or the IDB: both would in no way be out of place as they complement each other! We are grateful to the Contributors, General Editor and the Publishers for making so much knowledge available.

P. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Bible Translations: and how to choose between them.** By Alan S. DUTHIE. Exeter, Paternoster Press 1985. Pp. 127. £ 3.50.

What would be the criteria according to which one can choose between 43 existent English translations of the whole Bible and another 66 of the NT? the author gives us these criteria.

He studies all these translations from a variety of perspectives. The first section is entitled: *Who* is to translate *What*—that is, who are the translators, what is their background and knowledge of the original languages, and which texts do they use. The author then reflects upon the whole process of accurate translation and describes the various approaches. There are "short-cut" translations, namely, letter for letter, word for word, word and meaning, grammatical form and range of meaning translations. These approaches are contrasted with the "Meaning for Meaning" translation studied under the headings of words, phrases and clauses and sentences. This section is most interesting, informative and useful for anyone who has not studied or been involved in translation work. A large section follows on the way translations are presented. D. looks at the character of the English, the public for whom it is meant and then the divisions in the text, the accessibility of the content and the readability of the translation.

In the light of this prior study the author makes an assessment of all the full Bible translations and many of the NT. His major criteria for evaluation are "how well they convey the full meaning of the original to the widest audience of speakers of English today" (p. 93).

In the first category he places two translations: the *Good News Bible* (GNB) and the *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB). In the second category we find the *New American Bible* (NAB), the *New English Bible* (NEB), the *New International*

*Version* (NIV), the Moffatt, Knox and Fenton translations, *The Living Bible* and the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) in that order. Among the NT translations only one is in the first group, the Translators NT, while Barclay's NT and Phillips NT (2 ed) and a number of others are in the second category.

The author also notes that for a certain category of readers or for a certain type of study the evaluation would be different, i. e., for educated persons the NEB or for a type of biblical study the RSV would be better.

In conclusion, Duthie recommends that every Christian home and congregation should have the GNB and the advises them to have a few different translations. I agree with the author's evaluation of the Bible translations, and recommend religious, priest and lay people for personal use to choose between the GNB, NJB, NAB, NEB, NIV and not the RSV. The best would be the NJB but this is expensive. Normally, the GNB, NEB or NIV are available and inexpensive. My choice would be the GNB. This book will be of value to translators and theological libraries. There is a good bibliography.

P.M. MEAGHER

**The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.** Volume 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments. Volume 2: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works. Edited by James H. CHARLESWORTH. London, Darton, Longman and Todd. 1983 and 1985. Pp. 995 and 1006. £ 30 each.

The vitality, diversity and creative richness of early Judaism in the period 200 BCE-200 CE is reflected in various collections of literature, namely, the works of Philo and Josephus, the Qumran documents, Rabbinic Writings which contain early traditions, the interpretative translations of the Hebrew O' (Targums), Jewish magical papyri, Hermetica, Nag Hammadi literature, the Apocrypha and OT and NT Pseudepigrapha. Much of that body of literature designated as OT Pseudepigrapha has been available in English in C.H. Charles' two volume classic (1913). However since then new documents from that period and a wealth of knowledge of this literature are available which has made



a new collection and new translations with critical notes imperative. Scholars, teachers and students shall be deeply grateful to J.H. Charlesworth and the group of international Christian and Jewish scholars for the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

These volumes contain 52 documents with a supplement which contains fragmentary evidence of lost Judeo-Hellenistic literary works. The vast majority of these works come from or contain traditions which can be dated to the period 200 BCE-200 CE and were written by Jews or in some cases by early Christians. Except for two documents (one rabbinic and one from Qumran), all the documents found in Charles are included here with many more writings. All the translations and notes are new. The subtitle to each volume indicates that these writings have been collected according to the similarity of literary types (e.g. Apocalypses, Testaments, Songs. . .). There are five groupings. In each group the documents have been usually arranged in chronological order. Each group has a generic introduction.

Each document has its own introduction which follows a common format, namely, an overview of the whole text; a discussion about available texts, the original language, date and place of origin; an adequate description of its historical and theological implications; its relation to canonical and apocryphal books, and finally its cultural importance. These introductions condense years of scholarly research and therefore are very educative and informative. Occasionally, I would have wished more information would have been included rather than being referred to either the material available in Charles or other studies which normal readers cannot consult.

The new translations of each document are governed by the principles of "trustworthiness of the transmitted text" and "literal rendering". The literary quality and cultural milieu of the text has also been preserved rather than presenting a polished English rendition. The critical notes which accompany the translation at the bottom of the page are concerned with the textual variants in manuscripts, scholarly discussions, justification of the translations, cultural / historical information, explanatory material and an occasional theological reflection. They are not like the notes in the New Jerusalem Bible. At the end of Vol 2

there is an 85-page Index of topics and names. It is most useful and enables us to mine the treasures of this collection. The scholars who contributed are mainly North American, which reflects the amount of scholarly attention being paid there to inter-testamental literature. The editor is one of the most outstanding scholars in this field.

Charlesworth writes the general concise introduction: he places this literature within that period of great Jewish literary creativity, spells out the importance of these documents which take us into a new world, and describes significant theological concerns which recur (e.g. the meaning of sin, the origin of evil and theodicy; the emphasis on divine transcendence; concern with the coming of the Messiah; beliefs in the resurrection and descriptions of paradise). He also explains the meaning given to the term *Pseudepigrapha* and the reason for its retention and use. He describes the term from these perspectives: "The present description of the *Pseudepigrapha* is as follows: Those writings 1) that, with the exception of *Ahiqar*, are Jewish or Christian; 2) that are often attributed to ideal figures in Israel's past; 3) that customarily claim to contain God's word or message; 4) that frequently build upon ideas and narratives present in the Old Testament; 5) and that almost always were composed either during the period 200 B.C. to A.D. 200 or, though late, apparently preserve, albeit in an edited form, Jewish traditions that date from that period" (xxv). Note the qualifications in the description.

The editor rightly emphasizes the fact that this literature forces us to re-define commonly held descriptions of early Judaism which have over-emphasized its legalistic nature, its monolithic character, 'Normative Judaism', the dominance given to the four major sects, and the predominance of Hellenistic influence. Early Judaism had greater vitality and diversity, and Rabbinic Judaism should not be the norm for its description.

The importance of these documents is threefold. Along with other documentary evidence they enable the reader to enter the world of early Judaism and see the continuity between the religion of the OT and intertestamental Judaism and the continued process of interpretative reflection upon and embodiment of the religious heritage of the OT within

new and diverse circumstances. We become very aware of the influence of the events of history on interpretation. Secondly, these documents witness partially to that religio-cultural world within which Jesus lived and the NT and early Christianity were born. Specific texts are not so important as the socio-cultural-religious environment of these varied interpretations of the OT. The world we enter through these texts balances the Judaism we know from the large Rabbinic literary heritage. Not all the documents are relevant for students of the OT/NT. Late documents seem less relevant and yet they preserve at times and reflect ancient traditions. For too long and too often NT interpreters and students have neglected early Judaism and turned from the NT directly to the OT, oblivious of the 200-300 years of religious life between the Testaments. Finally, these documents are part of that Jewish legacy which is the heritage of Jews and Christians and could be a bridge to greater understanding, as is suggested in the Forewords for Jews and Christians. These two volumes must be found in any reputable theological library.

Patrick M. MEAGHER

### The Indian Heritage

*Viṣṇu the Ever Free. A Study of the Mādhva Concept of God.* By I. PUTHIADAM. *Madurai, Dialogue Series*, 1985, pp. viii-353. Rs. 45.

The author first presents the epistemological and metaphysical foundation of Mādhva's theology, emphasizing the role of *śruti*. After presenting the Mādhva idea of God (Viṣṇu) in Himself, he explains how He is related to the universe in general, and to Man and his destiny in particular. By way of conclusion he sums up the main ideas of Mādhva and in doing so shows us how Mādhva's theology is based on his overall approach to reality: reality is that which is the object of knowledge, and knowledge always implies the subject-object distinction (p. 318).

The exposition is clear, and the author shows forcefully how Mādhva's attack on Advaita is logically sound. He does, occasionally, question Mādhva himself, who reads a dualistic interpretation into his source texts (p. 96). He shows how Mādhva's thought is inade-

quate on important points: freedom as auto-determination (p. 159), the possibility of absolute beginning and end of beings other than Viṣṇu (p. 215). At times he makes comparative comments: the *avatāra* doctrine of Mādhva is similar to the docetist tendency is Christianity (p. 150).

However some very important questions appear to have received very little attention. The book belongs to a series that is "committed to the cause of man, with a view to the building of a more just and loving society" (i). The author himself hopes that dialogue will help "to find a basis for cooperation and integral human development" (p. 11). This being the concern both of the series and of the author, the question that should have been discussed is: Is Mādhva's belief that some souls can be liberated, some will always be in bondage, and some are destined to hell (p. 253) really helpful towards the formation of a just society? Does not such a theology have the contrary effect: legitimize inequality?

The author further claims that Mādhva has transformed and unified Sāmkhya concepts (p. 314), and that he rejects the existence of two independent absolute principles (p. 323). Here a distinction should have been made, because the desire/claim of a thinker need not always have validity. I fail to understand how a thinker can escape absolute dualism or, for that matter, pluralism if he asserts that *jīvas* (souls) and matter do not depend on God for their very being.

The book was originally presented as a doctoral thesis years ago, but it seems to have been printed recently in a great hurry. There are many things that have escaped the notice of the proof-reader: spelling defects, e.g., *bord* (p. i), *facination* (p. 323) instead of *board* and *fascination* respectively; defective breaking of words, e.g. *obje-ctive* (p. 14), *reme-morance* (p. 274); inadequate use of diacritical marks, e.g. *brahman* and *isvara* instead of *brahman* and *Īśvara* (p. 48); wrong fount, e.g., *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma*, instead of *artha*, *dharma* and *kāma*. In some places the critical apparatus has been incorporated into the text when it ought to have been relegated to the foot-notes (e.g., on pp. 330 and 333). The *Contents* leaves out Ch V: Viṣṇu and Man.

The book has seven appendices. Some of these topics really belong to the main

theme of the book (theism and *karma*, the idea of predestination) and should have found their place in the main part of the book. Some other topics could have been left out (categories of finite beings, *upāsana*).

Subhash ANAND

**Philosophical Implication of Dhvani.** Experience of Symbol Language in Indian Aesthetics. By Anand AMALADASS, S.J. *Publications of the De Nobili Research Library*, Vol. XI. Vienna, 1984. Pp. 240.

Fr Amaladass took a difficult area of the Indian tradition for his doctoral work in Madras. He presents here a revised version of his thesis on the *Dhvanyāloka* by Anandavardhana, a 9th century landmark in the development of the Indian philosophy of language and poetics. *Dhvani* is the power whereby (poetic) language enables the person attuned to beauty to enter into the aesthetic experience and—by extension—into the experience of transcendence. In often repeated metaphors, *dhvani* relates to the explicit language of a work of art as the soul to the body, or, more poetically, as beauty to the limbs of a lovely woman. *Dhvani* has been translated as evocation, allusion, suggestion. One could also think of more etymological translations like resonance or reverberation. Anandavardhana's namesake, Fr Anand, studies this text not merely from within the tradition of Indian aesthetics but also as a programme of hermeneutics and as a philosophy of language implying a particular metaphysical understanding of reality and leading to a mystical sense of union with transcendence. His study is therefore very personal and draws upon sources of thought from Western and Indian philosophy in his attempt to unearth the full potentialities of the thought of the Kashmiri author. But he comes back again and again to the text of the *Dhvanyāloka* to justify his explanations. Only occasionally does he refer also to Ananda's commentators, specially the great Abhinavagupta. Amaladass's extensive bibliography shows his wide reading in the traditions of this school.

I am not competent to evaluate this original work which has been published in a prestigious series. But the links the author establishes between the linguistic philosophy of Indian and Western studies specially in the areas of symbols and

hermeneutics are surely convincing or at least helpful. Probably under the influence of Dr Francis D'Sa, to whom the book is dedicated, A.A. often uses the concept of Significance or Meaningfulness as distinct from mere meaning. But the meaning (significance?) of this word is quite elastic, as it translates equally such technical terms as *artha*, *dhvani*, *vyangya*, *pratiyamāna*, *rasa*, *rasadhvani*, so that the concept that seemed very appropriate in the context of the Mīmāṃsaka philosophy might be ultimately less helpful in the more articulated views of the *alankāraśāstrins*. As in any work of dialogue or synthesis between different traditions, the interpretation of one tradition in terms of another may not always convince everybody. In particular the translation of *advaita* as "duality-in-unity" (p. 141) would hardly be justified within the Indian tradition where this expression would rather translate *viśiṣṭādvaita* or, perhaps more accurately, *dvaitādvaita*. The application of what is somewhat oddly called the "dhvani method" to biblical themes seems to me to derive more from biblical criticism than from the *alankāraśāstra*. But I may have missed the point here!

A.A. is a pioneer in a rather new field and the book will surely inspire more research in the rich Indian tradition of linguistics, a research that must not be satisfied with unearthing the past but must help us today to experience the Word of God as it "resonates" (*dhvani*) in the whole world. The essay presented here, is of course, technical in character and requires a good background in Indian philosophy. As a research work it is admirable and beautifully presented.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Stepping Stones.** Reflections on the Theology of Indian Christian Culture. By Jyoti SAHI. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1986. Pp. xvi-226. Rs 55.

*Stepping Stones* is a review of modern Indian Christian art written in an autobiographical vein, drawing on the author's experience as an artist for more than two decades. The book has twelve chapters and four appendices and is illustrated with more than forty paintings and line-drawings, both in colour and black and white.

As the lamented Matthew Lederle says in the Foreword, "Jyoti Sahi is a master both of the pen and of the

brush." He refers to Richard Taylor who says he is "the most cerebral of all the Indian Christian painters I know." His paintings adorn many a church in India and abroad and he is known for his semi-abstract Western style of painting enlivened with rich Indian symbols and motifs. Though most of his paintings have a simplicity and purity about them, some of his works are accused of scatteredness and complexity, too much intellect, theological cerebration and too much Hindu symbolism. So in some way, the book is an apologia. What is most striking about the book is that it raises pertinent questions about contemporary Christian art and theology.

The book makes explorative reflections on the role of an artist in India today. Keeping away from an obsolete "art for art's sake" orientation, Jyoti Sahi sees the role of the artist as an expression of "the life of a person or community in search of truth." It is here perhaps that the book makes a creative contribution to the Indian art. Jyoti Sahi offers groping glimpses of a *Weltanschauung*, a jeevandarshan for an Indian artist. He shows the importance of a thorough grasp of Christology and Ecclesiology which forms the basis for the artist's search for "a homeland which is not in the past but lies ahead of us."

He sees the changing horizons of Indian theology as it grapples with the massive poverty of the country and the need for the artist to come down from the classical, God-centered, mystical art of India to the prophetic art of the suffering Servant. That is to say that we need not paint Christ as a brahmin sanyasin any more. Instead, he must be presented as the dark-skinned compassionate carpenter. The chapter, "Pilgrim Christ of History," is a very original approach to artistic Christology.

Some might find the book a bit scattered, since the author has a weakness for diversions! Personally, I found it very inspiring as it shows the agony and ecstasy of a living artist. There is a simplicity and honesty which is touching. It is the 'warbling' of an artist who has big dreams for India. There is a lyrical quality to the whole book, rich in images and rhythmic recurrences of thought.

The lay-out and printing of the book could have been more tasteful.

Jaidev ATHICKAL

*Christ in India. Essays towards a Hindu-Christian Dialogue.* By Bodo GRIFFITHS. Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 1986. Pp. 251. Rs 20.

As acknowledged on the copyright page, this book was first published in England (by Darton, Longmann & Todd) in 1966 under the title *Christian Ashram*. It was reviewed in *The Clergy Monthly Supplement* 8 (1966-1967) p. 217. The same year a more profusely illustrated American edition came out under the title *Christ in India*, but with the same subtitle. This is an exact reprint of the same edition, minus the illustrations but with "A New Introduction" of two pages written in 1984. In it Griffiths acknowledges that his thinking has evolved considerably since the late fifties and early sixties when he wrote the 22 essays of the book. At that time he saw the Eastern Christian tradition as the possible bridge between the Western Church and Indian culture. Today he thinks, with Jules Monchanin, that the Indian Church "has to be neither Latin or Greek or Syrian, but 'totally Indian and totally Christian'" (p. 7). He is, if anything, even more keen on the discovery of Hinduism and thinks that the works of Capra and Schurmaher point towards the insights of the Indian sages. In his social thinking he feels closer to Mahatma Gandhi than to Liberation Theology, if based on a Marxist analysis of society. For Marxism does not challenge but takes for granted the present industrial system with a "technology based on a mechanistic system of science" (p. 8), while Gandhi challenged it.

Some of the essays may therefore be somewhat dated, but the book offers much that is fundamental for the questions of inculturation and the Hindu-Christian dialogue. We are grateful that *Asian Trading Corporation* has brought out this handy Indian edition at a very reasonable price. The book should find a place in all the libraries of seminaries, parishes and religious houses.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

*Perspectives on Sikh Studies.* By Jagjit SINGH. New Delhi, Guru Nanak Foundation, 1985. Pp. xii-184. Rs. 40.

The events in our country in the past few years invite us to pay closer attention to the Sikh heritage than has been done in the past. The Guru Nanak

Foundation of New Delhi does a useful work of disseminating scholarly and dispassionate, not uncommitted, information about the tradition. In the book presented here the author addresses himself to two specific questions: the attitude of Sikhism to caste and the source of militarization of the Sikh community.

In analysing the first question he describes clearly and in simple language the exact nature of the caste system and its distinctiveness in respect to other forms of social discrimination and stratification. He relies largely on such classical authors as Hutton, Ghurye, Ketkar and Max Weber. He presents the Sikh revolution as a protest against the caste system, effective because it succeeded in establishing a separate community, unlike other mediaeval bhakti movements which often protested against caste but remained within the structure and were ultimately tamed by it. The Sardar agrees, however, that "a heritage of caste-like prejudices and customs" (61) have remained in the community, inherited from the former ethos and insufficiently abolished in practice. He studies specifically the position of the Mazhabi (and to a lesser extent the Chamar) Sikhs. The important factor in this situation is that the ethos of the Panth is clearly contrary to the caste tradition. (An Appendix deals with the inter-caste marriages in Sikhism).

The second part of the book refutes the thesis that the militarization of the Khalsa is due to the large influx of Jats into the community. It rather flows from the Khalsa ideology (138) taught by the Gurus which could not be satisfied with a doctrinal or individualistic message but had to see it translated into a concrete living community with its own distinctive life and structures.

Written at the level of educated popularization the book can teach us a good deal about the caste system and about the Sikh community. The author had developed his analysis more thoroughly in his earlier book *The Sikh Revolution* (New Delhi, Bahri Publications, 1981). One would like a reflection on how the egalitarian ethos within a community that rejects caste can translate itself into an egalitarian attitude of dialogue with other communities. Regrettably, the editing of this book is poor.

G. GISPART-SAUCH, S.J.

## Systematic Theology

**The Compassionate God. An exercise in the Theology of transposition.** By Choan-Seng SONG. London, SCM Press, 1982. Pp. xiii-284. £ 5.95.

From the East Asian point of view, for centuries Christ was almost exclusively a point-nosed Saviour to the point-nosed persons of the world. What does he mean to the flat-nosed Chinese, Koreans and Japanese? In other words, what is the relevance of Christianity in a pluralistic world? Inter-religious communication at the rational level is, according to the author, not possible. So he suggests a method of *transposition* going beyond human boundaries, of cultures, religions and histories in order to have deeper contacts with the strange and mysterious ways and thoughts of God in creation.

In part I, the author perceives "transposition" in the Bible itself. He takes the reader through the Tower of Babel, the migration of Abraham, the Exodus and the Exile, Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar, to show how biblical faith passes through cultural reinterpretation, not so much in terms of ideas as of images. The decisive "transposition" occurs in the death and resurrection of Christ. The Gentile controversy in the early Church indicates the end of "centrism." There are no more foreigners in Christ.

The author then illustrates the theme through Chinese history, first from Confucianism to Buddhism which became thoroughly inculturated. More recently came the Taiping Christian interlude which nearly turned China upside down. Still, it remained the dream of a few extremists who wanted to assault the Confucian citadel, and not merely the Manchu dynasty, in favour of a Christian empire. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of Chairman Mao as it fell into the hands of the "Gang of Four" led by Mao's wife Chiang Ching was bound to fail as it was based on a "dictatorship by idea." The new awakening represented by the old manifestos on "Democracy Wall" in Beijing provides new hope. Although enthusiastic Christians outside China are asked to exercise patience, the distance from Golgotha to Beijing can be bridged by God's politics of love and justice.

(continued on page 389)

# Vidyajyoti

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### In This Issue

Already last year VIDYAJYOTI opened for our readers the theme of the 1987 Synod of Bishops (pp. 130-133) and later devoted the whole issue of June-July to this topic so vital for the renewal of the Church, specially in Asia. As we go to press a meeting of the FABC is taking place in Tokyo, with a substantial representation from India, to reflect on the position of the laity in the Asian Church. The question that troubles us in this continent is: Why, barring a few countries, does the Catholic laity appear passive, marginal, uninfluential in the life of the Church? What is the history that has produced such a situation, what is the theology that undergirds it? We publish in this issue the first of two instalments of Fr Felix WILFRED's theological reflection on the question. In this first part of the article he sees the absence of a strong sense of the Spirit in the theology on the Church as the root of the heavily juridical perception of the Church in our lives, and therefore of the "absence" of the laity. If they are considered "subjects", it is not in the dynamic sense of the word, i.e. makers of their Church's history, but in the purely passive sense of being the "obedient flock." We hope to publish the second part of this article in the December issue, and other articles on the topic in the early part of 1987.

Fr George V. LOBO, well-known to our readers, continues the reflection on the second Roman document on the theology of liberation which we initiated in the month of August. He analyses the document from a pastoral perspective and shows the values it contains which now need to be expressed in the pastoral and educational activity of the Church.

"History is the teacher of life," the ancients used to say. Fr Roman LEWICKI draws from his vast reading of Church history a case in point. The confrontation of Ambrose of Milan with Emperor Theodosius has many lessons today for the relation of the Church authority to the civil powers. The author shows that even at this official level the personal factor in the relationship of the two leaders was vital. One need not strain one's mind to find areas of applicability of this lesson to various fields of the life of the Church in India today.

Finally, a note from Dr S. Amirtham tells us of the ongoing experiment in the Protestant churches for a renewal of the programmes of theological formation in function of today's needs, and Fr P. MEAGHER introduces some recent biblical literature useful for a modern theological initiation.

# Three Nodal Points in the Theology of the Laity Today\*

Fr Felix WILFRED

**M**ORE than any other single section in the Church, the laity greeted with enthusiasm the new image of themselves given by Vatican II. A spate of new initiatives and experiments followed.<sup>1</sup> The laity assumed various ministerial functions and leadership roles in remote communities. In thousands of basic communities that sprang up all over the world in a short span of time, the laity gave expression to their charisms and gifts, and led the communities to achieve involvement in the world.<sup>2</sup> One felt in the immediate post-Conciliar period that this active participation of the laity in the life, organisation and mission of the Church will increase progressively. The present mood seems to show such prognostics were wrong.

The current deep divergences on the interpretation of Vatican II, its teaching and overall significance have deeply affected the understanding of the laity and the extent of their participation.<sup>3</sup> There

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\* This is a revised version of a paper presented at the Bishops' Institute for Lay Apostolate II (BILA) of FABC held in Bangalore, May 1986.

1. In Asia one of the significant experiments was done by the Church in Malaysia. This 'aggiornamento' was described as a "shock treatment." During the whole month of August 1976, the bishops and priests of the country gathered in Penang for a theological updating. The laity, left without ordained ministers one full month, were forced to organize by themselves the Christian communities and exercise their leadership-role. Cf. K. WILLIAMS, "A Priestless August?" in *Teaching All Nations*, vol. 14/2 (1977) pp. 100-109; M. ROEKERTS, *The Malay Dilemma*, Brussels, Pro Mundi Vita Dossiers, 1984, pp. 23ff; Bishop A. SELVANAYAGAM, *Shocking the Laity for Participation in the Life of the Church*. Report presented at BILA II, Bangalore 1986.

2. There is abundant literature, often small pamphlets and tracts, reporting lived experiences of the participation and leadership of the laity. One could refer, for example, to the reports presented at the *Intercontinental Symposium on Local Church*, Bruges, June 2-8, 1985. With the Asian situation in mind we note some major contributions on Basic Christian Communities where the participation of the laity has been very active: K. GASPAS, *The Local Church and Militant Lay-Participation*, Brussels, Pro Mundi Vita Dossiers 1985; C. ABESAMIS, "Faith and Life: Reflections from the Grassroots in the Philippines," in *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity*, ed. by V. FABELLA, New York, Orbis Books 1980, pp. 123-139; J.P. PINTO, *Inculturation through Basic Christian Communities. An Indian Perspective*, Bangalore, ATC 1985. Cf. also S. TORRES-J. EAGLESON, *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities*, New York, Orbis Books 1981.

3. For a different assessment of Vatican II, cf. Joseph CARD. RATZINGER with Vittorio MANONI, *The Ratzinger Report. An Exclusive Interview on the State of the*

has taken place in many countries and regions a freezing, so to say, of the new image of the laity, which is but the reflection of the tendency of arriving at what is considered a "stabilization" in regard to the renewal and reforms of Vatican II. Among other things, it is feared that if the initiatives and leadership of the laity were to increase further, they may slowly blur the distinction between the ordained and the non-ordained. This fear is not unfounded. The progressive active role of the laity and the emergence of lay-leadership in certain countries, particularly where Christian communities are left without an ordained minister, have led some to ask whether these leaders could not preside over the Eucharistic celebration also.<sup>4</sup> In this climate of danger that the ministerial priesthood will be undermined, it is understandable that one tends to emphasize the distinctive role of the ordained minister. In practice, certain over-reactions to this and similar questions have resulted in weakening the thrust of Vatican II on the vocation and mission of the laity.

Therefore, the period between the Extraordinary Synod of 1985 and the Synod on the Laity in 1987 should be a period to study the present state of the laity in the Church in the light of the post-conciliar developments and to think out new directions and emphases that would continue the spirit and teaching of the Council. This paper is a small contribution towards this goal.

I should like to develop three nodal points where many of the

*Church*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press 1985; G. ALBERIGO (ed.), *Ecclesiologia del Vaticano II: Dinamismi e Prospettive*, Bologna, Edizione Dehoniane 1981; G. ALBERIGO-J.P. JOSSUA, *Chiesa in Cammino? L'itinerario del post-concilio*, Brescia, Paidea 1985; G. THILS, "Vingt ans apres Vatican II," in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, vol. 107 (1985) pp. 22-42; J. DELUMEAU, *Le christianisme va-t-il mourir?*, Paris, Hachette 1977; J. KERKHOFFS, *The Second Vatican Council. Twenty Years On*, Brussels, Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin 102, 1985; P. HEBBLETHWAITE, *Synod Extraordinary. The Inside Story of the Rome Synod*, November/December 1985, London, Darton, Longman and Todd 1986; "Bishops for Renewal"—Full text of the Submission of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in preparation for the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, in *The Tablet* 3 August 1985, pp. 814-819. The final report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops 1985, after speaking of the lights and shadows in the post-conciliar period, appeals to a deeper reception of the Council. For the text, cf. *The Extraordinary Synod*, Boston, St Paul Editions, pp. 38 ff.

4. *Priestless Parishes in Western Europe*, Brussels, Pro Mundi Vita, 1979; for accounts of priestless parishes in individual countries, cf. *Concilium* 133 (3/1980): G. FRANZONI reports the situation of Italy, J. LOPIS of Spain, M. BRULIN of France and K. DERKSEN of Holland. Cf. also J. KOMONCHAK, "Non-ordained and Ordained Ministers in the Local Church", *ibid.* pp. 44-50. The theological questions concerning this situation is reflected in the works of E. SCHILLEBEECKX in his two recent works on ministry: *Ministry, Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ*, New York, Crossroad 1981; *The Church with a Human Face*, London, SCM Press 1985. For a Critique of the position of Schillebeeckx cf. G. MARTELET, *Deux mille ans d'Eglise en question*, Paris, Editions du Cerf 1984.



present-day questions concerning the laity, their role, participation, etc., seem to meet and intersect. They are also points which point to new directions and orientations in the understanding of the mission of the laity. These three reflections, developed in three unequal parts, may appear somewhat theoretical, but they have far-reaching practical implications. The reflections naturally have as their background the situation of the laity in Asia.

## PART I

### The Image of the Laity between Pneumatological and Christomonistic Ecclesiologies

#### *Beyond Stereotyped Contrasts*

It is commonplace today to contrast the pyramidal model of the Church against the circle or communitarian model. While the former is seen as an exaggerated view of the place of the hierarchy and the clergy, the latter is supposed to accord due place to the laity, who by virtue of baptism enjoy the same fundamental Christian dignity as the clergy, with all the implications this has for the life and mission of the Church. It is, by and large, within this framework that theological reflections on the place of the laity and their vocation are elaborated. But we need to go beyond this stereotyped contrast of pyramidal and circle models. For, reflections starting from this contrast neither go deep enough into the theology of the laity, nor explain adequately the present experience of a still very prevalent clerical domination.

The conflict between a pyramidal and communitarian model is itself, in fact, the expression of the deeper ecclesiological question of christomonism and pneumatology. Christomonism is the tendency to explain the Church, its life and structures in relation to Christ *alone*. This is, of course, to be distinguished from a legitimate christocentrism which was at the heart of the renewal inspired by Vatican II. Pneumatology gives due place to the role of the Spirit in the Church, its life, structures and mission, in intimate relation to the mystery of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

5. Cf. Y. CONGAR, "Actualité de la Pneumatologie in *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*," *Atti del Congresso Teologico Internazionale de Pneumatologia*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1983, pp. 15 ff; *id.*, *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, vols. I-III, New York, The Seabury Press 1983; *id.*, "Pneumatologie ou Christomonisme dans la tradition latine?" in *Ecclesia a Spiritu Sancto edocata* (Hommage à Mgr Gérard Philips), Gembloux, Editions J. Duculot 1970, pp. 41-83; J. MOLTSMANN, *Church in*

The understanding of the role of the laity in the Church today ultimately depends on whether our vision of the Church is based on Christ alone to the point of becoming christomonistic or whether there is in it a real place for pneumatology. Only an ecclesiological vision that has pneumatology inbuilt in it as an essential dimension, will be able to recognize the place of the laity in the Church. For, the christomonistic orientation underscores the role of the hierarchy and the clergy as representatives of Christ. While the pneumatological vision finds within its framework a place for the ministers, the christomonistic conception does not allow a place for the role of the Spirit, except quite marginally.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, we need to study this question which constitutes one of the nodal points in the theology of the laity today and has many practical consequences. For, it is here that many problems like the participation of the laity, dialogue, collaboration, etc., cross and intersect.

### *The Laity as Subjects*

The first and foremost reason why the laity are important in the Church is simply that without their *faith* there is no Church. The Church is a community of *believers*. It exists by the faith of a believing community. The Church is present not simply by the fact that the objectified Word of God is present, orthodox tenets of faith are held, hierarchical and ministerial structures are established and sacraments are administered. Important as all these may be, the Church is not there as long as a living encounter between *human subjects* with flesh and bone and God does not take place here and now, as long as human subjects do not meet each other and interact in love and service.

This is what is implied when the Church is said to be a reality of communion. The Church is a community of human subjects or

*the Power of the Spirit*, London, SCM Press 1975; H. MUHLEN, *L'Esprit dans l'Eglise*, Paris, ed. du Cerf, 1969.

6. The Orthodox theologians accuse the Latin Church of christomonism. For the Latins, according to them, the Spirit does not enter into the very act of constituting the Church, but rather is seen only as a help and guide in an already well established and structured Church. In the Orthodox view, even though Vatican II marked an advancement over earlier positions, still its pneumatology is not strong enough. Cf. J. ZIZIOULAS, "Implications ecclesiologiques de deux types de pneumatologie", in *Communio Sanctorum*, Melanges offerts a J.J. Von Allmen, Geneva, 1982, pp. 141-154; ID., *Being as Communion*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1985; S. BOULCAKOV, *Le Paraclet*, Paris, Aubier 1962; P. EVDOKIMOV, "L'Esprit Saint et l'Eglise, L'Avenir de l'Eglise et de l'Oecumenisme," *Symposium de l'Academie Internationale des Sciences Religieuses*, Paris 1960; pp. 85-110; V. LOSSKY, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London 1957; ID., *In the Image and Likeness of God*, London-Oxford 1975.

agents whom God calls, among whom Jesus is present as the resurrected Lord, and on whom the Spirit bestows his manifold gifts. Without the coming together of human subjects there is no Church. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the understanding of the Church is basically that of a gathering (*quahal Yahweh—Ekklesia*).<sup>7</sup>

The Church is, therefore, not an abstraction but a reality made of men, women and children as active agents. This fundamental truth is given expression when Vatican II speaks of the people as the subjects of liturgical actions in which the Church manifests itself: the principal manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God's holy people in the same liturgical celebration.<sup>8</sup> It is evident, then, that the laity are not simply a section within the Church but they themselves *are* the Church along with others who have the charism of ordained ministry. The laity are active agents in a community of faith, hope and love, in which the ministry has certainly a place but does not replace the reality of their being the subjects in the Church, nor turn them into simple objects.

#### *Constituted by the Spirit*

To speak of the Church as a community of active subjects who believe, love, hope and celebrate is to speak of the Spirit and his active presence. Even though historically the Church was *instituted* by Christ, it is by the action of the Spirit that the Church is *constituted* today as a community of faith.<sup>9</sup> Since the Church is constituted by the Spirit gathering together human *subjects* who believe in Jesus and God's action in him and pledge themselves as true disciples to follow the path of Jesus, what is foremost in the Church is the growth of the faithful. In any true Church-community, therefore, life and witness takes precedence over all other elements—institutions, structures, ministries, orthodoxy, etc.

All this indicates why the importance of the laity being recognised by the hierarchy and the clergy is not comparable to the directors of an organisation or company, considering even the least worker as

7. Cf. the classical article of K.L. SCHMIDT, "Ekklesia," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, vol. III, 1965, pp. 501-538.

8. Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 41; cf. Y. CONGAR, "L'Ecclesia ou communauté chrétienne, sujet integral de l'action liturgique," in *La Liturgie apres Vatican II* (Unam Sanctam 66), Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1967, pp. 241-282.

9. Cf. J.D. ZIZIOULAS, *Being as Communion*.

important for its welfare and smooth functioning. There can be no question of one section of the Church—the hierarchy, the clergy and the religious—"inviting", in a paternalistic or condescending manner, the laity to participate in the life and mission of the Church—since, as believers, this is their inalienable right.

Unlike in other societies, in the Church there is a basic equality both in dignity and in responsibility,<sup>10</sup> deriving from the *direct* union of every believer with Christ through baptism. What lies, therefore, at the heart of the constitution of the Church, at its very root, is a sacramental reality which cannot be undone by the hierarchy and the clergy. Just as the basic equality of the Church has a sacramental root, so too the offices in the Church have a sacramental foundation. This is clearly implied when Vatican II teaches that not only the bishop's power of sanctifying, but also his power of teaching and governing derive from the sacrament of the episcopate.<sup>11</sup> Office and ministry are themselves charisms in a community constituted by the Spirit and endowed with diversity of gifts.<sup>12</sup>

### *What Concerns All*

Seen in the light of the sacramental foundation which binds together all believers, the faith through which they become subjects and active agents, the witness to which they are called, the equal dignity and responsibility they possess, it ought to be clear why co-responsibility, collaboration, dialogue and participation belong to the very nature and basic constitution of the Church and are not matters of simple Church organization. They have their deepest roots in the sharing of a common faith and hope. Hence, of whatever pertains to the life of the Church-community or its mission in the world the laity are an inalienable part.

Due to certain historical developments in the course of the centuries, the involvement and participation of the laity was progressively reduced. In spite of it, some basic principles were held firmly. It may be enough here to refer to the Roman maxim, "*Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet*" (What concerns all should be dealt and approved by all),<sup>13</sup> invoked by Pope Innocent III

10. *Lumen Gentium* 32.

11. *Lumen Gentium* 11. Cf. the commentary of K. Rahner on this point in H. VORGRIMMER, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, London, Burns and Oates, 1966, Vol. I, pp. 193-194.

12. K. RAHNER, *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, London, Burns and Oates 1964.

13. Y. CONGAR, "*Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet*," in *Revue d'histoire du droit*, 1958, pp. 210-259.

and even by Pope Boniface VIII to bring out forcibly the necessity of all believers to effectively participate in the life of the Church as active agents.<sup>14</sup> This is a far cry from the view according to which the laity would be objects of Church-administration—the Church understood as the hierarchy—or from the dichotomy between *ecclesia docens et ecclesia discens* (teaching Church and learning Church).

It is the same awareness that the faithful are active subjects, that they are constituted into a Church by the Spirit, which underlies the ecclesiological concept of "reception".<sup>15</sup> Reception evidently does not mean that the decisions and resolutions coming either from the past, or from a superior authority need juridical convalidation by the subjects. It means, rather, the active recognition on the part of the believers of the validity of what is being handed down as something in conformity with genuine faith, leading to an acceptance of the same. It is in this way that most of the early councils, their decisions and definitions were subsequently "received". More about this point in part III.

It is clear, then, that the laity, the people of God, cannot be viewed simply in terms of objects or in terms of a superior-or-inferior relationship (*secundum sub et supra*) without reference to their life of faith through the exercise of their own freedom. Invoking formal authority or imposing decisions from above on the part of the hierarchy and the clergy without respect for the communal and communitarian nature of the Church and the growth of the believers would go against the very basic constitution of the Church and its *raison d'être*.

### *Understanding Representation Rightly*

In a christomonistic perspective which is authority-centered and juridical, there is little room for the faithful as active subjects. Christomonism comes to expression when the hierarchy, priests, ordained ministers, are said to be *representatives* of Christ, understood in a narrow sense, that is, without relation to the community in which the Spirit is active. According to this perspective, life, grace, organization, everything flows down into the Church from the office-bearers

14. This maxim was made part of the Decretals. *Regula* 29.

15. Cfr. H. GRILLMEIER, "Konzil und Rezeption," in *Theologie und Philosophie* 45 (1970) pp. 321-352; Y. CONGAR, "La réception comme réalité ecclésiologique," in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 56 (1972) pp. 369-403; id., "Reception as an Ecclesiological Reality" in *Concilium* no. 8 (1970), pp. 43-68.

who represent Christ. It is from them that the rest of the Church has faith, sacraments, teaching, direction. Conformity and obedience to the office-holders is also automatically fidelity to Christ and the Gospel.

The idea that one section of the Church represents Christ exclusively does not do justice to the reality of the Church as a mystery rooted in Christ. Christ is represented by the *whole Church* inasmuch as it is *his body*, and not by the ordained ministers alone. One should not think of their identity in terms of representation. It is noteworthy that Vatican II, despite much pressure, has studiously avoided to apply the expression "*alter Christus*" to priests.<sup>16</sup> There should be the fundamental conviction that the one ministry and authority of Jesus is continued by the whole Church in a variety of ways so that Jesus and his ministry is never identified with one particular office or individual. In fact, precisely because it is the one ministry of Jesus that is carried on in many forms, we find the N.T. associating Jesus with various forms of ministries. He is said to be '*servant*' (Phil 2:7; Mt 12:18; Acts 3:13; 4 27,30), '*deacon*' (Rom 15:8), '*apostle*' (Heb 3:1; cf. Mk 9:37; Lk 10:16; Jn 3:34), '*teacher*' (Mt 23:8; Jn 13:13), '*bishop and shepherd*' (1 Pt 2:25; 5:5; 13:20).<sup>17</sup>

Christ is re-presented today in the world by the Church which is his body—the community of his disciples. Precisely because Jesus, in virtue of the mystery of his resurrection and by the power of the Spirit, exists as a body, as a corporate personality (*Christus totus*), representing him cannot be only by a few individuals who have the service of leadership and ministries in the Church. Within the Church community which is the body of Christ, they can represent Christ in the aspect of his being head of this body. This, however, is not complete without the representation of Christ by the whole body of the Christian community. Therefore, any reflection on the place of the ordained minister in the Church need to be indissolubly linked to the community.

Moreover, even this representation of the headship of Christ by

16. Cf. H.M. LEGRAND, "Lo sviluppo di chiese-soggetto: un' istanza del Vaticano II," in *L'Ecclesiologia del Vaticano II; Dinamismi e Prospettive* (see note 3) pp. 129-164 (p. 150). Cf. also P.J. CORDES, *Sendung zum Dienst. Exegetisch-historische und systematische Studien zum Konzilsdekret 'Vom Dienst der Priester'*, Frankfurt a.M. 1972; id., "Sacerdos alter Christus? Die Repräsentationsgedanke in der Amtstheologie", in *Catholica* 26 (1977), pp. 38-49.

17. Cf. E. SCHWEIZER, *Church Order in the New Testament*, London, SCM Press, 1979 (3rd impression); cf. also R.E. BROWN, *Priest and Bishop. Biblical Reflections*, London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1971.

the leaders and ministers of the Church has to be understood not in an authoritarian way, but rather in an iconic or typological manner, in the sense that they are the image or type of Christ the head as an icon is the image of the reality. This is something important to note so that in the understanding of authority and ministry, the juridical aspect may not overshadow the spiritual and mystical meaning. In an iconic and typological understanding of ministry, the authority of Jesus becomes the source and point of reference.

Similarly, the apostles and their heritage live in the entire Church. They cannot be exclusively represented or embodied in a few individuals. For, the apostolicity of the Church is not primarily, much less exclusively, a question of ecclesiastical office and historic succession of ministers, but a question of the entire Church being faithful to the spirit and teachings and the mission of the apostles.<sup>18</sup>

Ministry and succession are only one aspect of apostolicity. There is a very important eschatological dimension in the concept of apostle. The identity of apostles as it emerges from the N.T. is essentially related to the future.<sup>19</sup> The apostles were sent into the world by the Risen Lord to proclaim the Kingdom of God and prepare the end (Mt 19:28; 28:20; Lk 22:30; Acts 1:8). This eschatological mission confided to the apostles, by which the Church continues to be a living reality, cannot be the exclusive privilege of the hierarchy and the ministers. In the measure in which the laity pursue the eschatological mission of the apostles towards the world, they too represent them and embody their spirit.

In short, only a pneumatological and communal conception of the Church furnishes an adequate framework for a proper understanding of the laity. The perspective is not exclusivist but inclusive. For, here Christ, the apostles and the Spirit are not tied to certain persons, ministries, institutions and structures but become the common heritage of all believers. These realities live and act in the laity as well as in the hierarchy and the clergy. It is this fact which should also lead to a profound respect in the Church for all charisms and a diversity of ministries—ordained and non-ordained—and call for a genuine pluralism.

18. Cf. F. WILFRED, *Credo Apostolicam Ecclesiam. Apostolicity of the Church with special Reference to Young Churches*, Tiruchirapalli 1986 (with further bibliographical indications).

19. Cf. R. SCHNACKENBURG, "L'Apostolicité: Etat de la Recherche," in *Istina* 14 (1969), pp. 14-31; W. PANNENBERG, "La Signification de l'eschatologie pour la compréhension de l'apostolicité et de la catholicité de l'église," *ibid.* pp. 154-170.

On the other hand, an ecclesiology which is christomonistic will tend to play down the role of the laity seeing them as passive subjects, and to highlight the authority of the office-holders in the Church as deriving from Christ who is represented by the apostles, who in their turn are represented by bishops, priests, etc. In such a conception of representation, a division is introduced in the people of God between two groups—those who are active, those who teach, on the one side, and those who are passive, who do not possess any power from above. No doubt, the Church is called the body of the glorified Christ. But the representation of him through the ministers alone could lead to a total misrepresentation of the Church, if one forgets that the Church is the *emple of the Holy Spirit*, that it is the *people of God*. Further, it consolidates the conception and attitude that the office in the Church is independent of the community, while tradition views office necessarily in relation to the community.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, a christomonistic ecclesiology will tend to be vertical, juridical and universalistic, in the sense that it may find it hard to tolerate diversity, particularity and genuine pluralism.

### *Tracing Back*

The image of the laity inherited from the last few centuries,<sup>21</sup> and still prevalent in many circles in the postconciliar period, stems from a christomonistic perspective. The pneumatological and communion-al vision of Vatican II opened up a fresh and new image of the role of the laity, and offered new structural possibilities for the exercise of their Christian responsibilities. If this vision has not become consciously accepted and the new structures not put into practice in many quarters of the Church, we should look for an explanation of this state of affairs. Several reasons could be adduced. But ultimately, I think, it could be explained by going back to Vatican II itself and its document on the Church.

To anyone who is familiar with the conciliar discussions and the history of the evaluation of various documents, it cannot escape how on several issues the Council, faced with polarizing tendencies, had to content itself with positions of compromise. As a result, certain

20. A very important and enlightening study on this point is that of C. VOGEL, "Titre d'ordination et lien du presbyter a la communauté locale dans l'église ancienne," in *La Maison-Dieu* 113 (1973), pp. 70-85; cf. also J.D. ZEZIOLAS, *Being as Communion*, pp. 209-246.

21. Cf. S.C. NEILL and H.R. WEBER (eds), *The Layman in Christian History*, London, SCM Press, 1963.



ambiguity of orientation is inherent in the documents of the Council themselves. Such was clearly the case with the document on the Church.<sup>22</sup> Here a pneumatological and communal vision was juxtaposed to an authority-centered and universalistic concept of the Church, as is evident when we compare the first two chapters with the third. This, it looks to me, is the fundamental cause for the many tensions and conflicts we are experiencing today in the Church.

The trend which in the Council itself opposed many of its innovations, perceived the post-conciliar period as a period of crisis and danger of the Church. Today, after the post-conciliar years of enthusiasm, we are faced with so many difficulties in translating into practice some of the basic intuitions of the Council because attempts are made to re-impose the universalistic and juridical ecclesiology and leave in oblivion the pneumatological vision. The point forgotten is that what is *specific* to Vatican II is not the juridical ecclesiology, which was inherited from the last few centuries and found also expression in the Council documents, but the vision of communion which drew inspiration from the New Testament and the life and practice of the early Church. We cannot let this vision be eclipsed.

### *A Thorn in the Flesh?*

In this whole context, one can explain why the structures meant to enable the active participation of the laity such as parish councils, pastoral councils, etc., have not, as experience shows, been successful in many areas and regions. This is because they have been, by and large, viewed from the perspective of a juridical ecclesiology, and therefore as new structural means for administering or managing efficiently the parish, diocese, etc. These structures presuppose as their natural substratum a pneumatological and communal ecclesiology, and they need to be continually nourished by this vision.<sup>23</sup> What has happened is that the "new" reality has been glued, in practice, to a vertical, juridical and christomonistic vision of the Church. The conflicts and struggles experienced in forming the participatory struc-

22. For a thorough-going study on the conciliar debates, cf. A. ACERBI, *Due Ecclesiologie: Ecclesiologia Giuridica ed Ecclesiologia di Comunione nella Lumen Gentium*, Bologna, Edizioni Dehoniane, 1975; cf. also H. POTTMEYER "Continuità e innovazione nell'ecclesiologia del Vaticano II," in *L'Ecclesiologia del Vaticano II*, (see note 3), pp. 71-95.

23. Cf. F. WILFRED, "Ecclesial Communion and its Structural Expressions: Some Reflections on the Post-Conciliar Situation" in *Word and Worship*, 18 (1985) pp. 227-238.

tures and making them really function, are then explainable. It is a new piece of cloth sewn on the old, resulting in a worse tear! Therefore, for the recognition of the rightful place of the laity it is indispensable that we adopt the pneumatological and communal vision. Only within this framework can the place of both the laity and the ordained ministers be guaranteed.

Precisely because some of the clergy and leaders of the Church look at the structures of lay participation from a predominantly administrative and juridical point of view, they feel they can easily dispense with these structures, or, at best, tolerate them. These structures have become for some of the clergy and pastors a thorn in the flesh. The authorities may tend to cripple the functioning of these bodies by studiously avoiding open dialogue and differences of views. The functioning of such structures is made to appear broad-based and to allow room for dialogue and consultation. In reality, they are often attuned to the opinion and wishes of the authority.

Pastoral councils, parish councils, etc., should not be viewed as bodies designed primarily to facilitate the organization and coordinate the activities of the Christian community, but rather as opportunities or means which contribute to the creation of the very being of the Church as communion. They are structural means wherein the Spirit can act and lead the believers to mutual respect and recognition of the role of one another, deepening the bonds of fellowship through dialogue, exchange of views, common decision and selfless collaboration without letting anyone impose his or her will on others.

Participatory structures in the Church need to be taken with utmost seriousness because they are occasions for the charisms of the laity to blossom. The manifestation of the charisms of the laity cannot be left to the arbitrary decisions of the ecclesial authority: it is a right and a duty. For the exercise of their apostolate the Spirit has given the faithful specific gifts. "From the reception of these charisms or gifts including those which are less dramatic, there arise for each believer the *right and duty (ius et officium)* to use them in the Church and in the world. . . ."<sup>24</sup>

Harping on the fact that these participatory bodies are *only consultative* reflects a purely juridical attitude, and the absence of the spirit of communion in which the Church-community should function. On the other hand, given the right and duty (*ius et officium*) which

the laity have of exercising their charisms, it would appear that there is nothing on principle against a deliberative role of the laity in the Christian community and in the various participatory structures. Such a deliberative role can be exercised without prejudice to the legitimate place of the ordained minister, his right and authority in the Christian community. Karl Rahner writes in this regard:

A more obvious participation of the laity is required, not only in the appointment of office-holders, but also in other decision-making processes in the life of the Church. In such decisions it must be admitted that the bishop has a personal and inalienable right which is qualitatively different from any existing or conceivable right of other members of the Church to share in discussions, but this does not mean at all that priests and lay people can never have more than an advisory function in regard to these decisions. Such an assertion cannot really be deduced from the orthodox theology of the episcopal office and it also contradicts the actual practice of the Church throughout all the centuries up to the present time. The pastor should remain a pastor, but this certainly does not mean that he is to treat his flock as if they were really sheep. But if this is not to happen, then there must today also be a right on the part of priests and lay people to co-operate in varying degrees and in forms appropriate to the matter in hand, in a deliberative and not merely consultative way in the Church's decisions.<sup>25</sup>

### *Holding Brotherhood Aloft*

We need to consider this whole issue not only at the juridical level but also at a deeper level, at the level where we touch the core of the Christian message. It is the perspective of true Christian brotherhood. The fundamental truth that all Christians—bishops, priests, religious, laity—form a brotherhood should shine through the relationships, planning and action of the Christian community.

Therefore, the difference of roles between the clergy and the laity should not be stressed to the extent of overlooking the more fundamental and vital principle of Christian brotherhood and the equality of all believers. Undoubtedly, there is a place for the authority of the hierarchy and of all ordained ministers in the Church. But their place, which can be traced back to Jesus' intention of providing leadership in his Church, cannot contradict his more basic vision of a community of disciples living in the spirit of fraternity, equality and service.

It is within the scope of this vision that the meaning of authority,

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25. K. RAHNER, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, London, SPCK, 1974, p. 121.

hierarchy and ordained ministry should be set. Therefore even though, through certain historical circumstances, the right perspective and priority have been lost in the history of Christianity in the past centuries, leading to strains and tensions in the relationship between the clergy and the laity (with a domination in practice of the clergy over the laity), today we should in Asia try to re-think in a more basic way and re-order the clergy-laity relation within the horizon of Christian brotherhood and communion.

### *Fraternal Consensus and Democratic Values*

Often one hears certain stereotyped slogans as "The Church is not a democracy" voiced specially when it is a matter of taking the laity into confidence. With equal vehemence there are others who assert that "The Church ought to be a democracy."<sup>26</sup> More often than not, there is under such catch-phrases a very incomplete and even wrong conception of what democracy is. When democracy is related to the Church, one immediately thinks of a political system of government, the sovereignty of the people, techniques, methods and procedures in deciding particular issues on the basis of majority votes, the right of everyone to express his or her political will through the ballot, etc.

But we cannot doubt that beyond these *formal* elements of democracy as a *system*, there is a certain *material content*, certain *values* which this system enshrines, such as freedom, the dignity of persons, their legitimate rights, solidarity, etc.<sup>27</sup> Though these values in depth are truly Gospel values, and though at least as far as the West is concerned, Christianity provided the basis for democracy,<sup>28</sup> yet, ironically, after centuries it was the developments in the world which brought to the consciousness of the Church the need of incorporating these values in the organisation of its life.

26. L. SWIDLER is only a representative of a group of people maintaining this thesis. Cf. his article "Demokratia: The Rule of the People of God or Consensus Fidelium" in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19 (1982), pp. 226-243.

27. For a concise presentation of the different understandings of democracy, distinctions and the evolution of this concept, cf. H. SCHNEIDER, "Democracy. The Idea and the Reality," in *Concilium* vol. 3, no. 7 (1971), pp. 12-47; K. LEHMANN (now bishop of Mainz), "On the Dogmatic Justification for a Process of Democratization in the Church," *ibid.* pp. 60-86; cf. also J. RATZINGER-H. MAIER, *Demokratie in der Kirche*, Limburg 1970; K. RAHNER, "Demokratie in der Kirche," in *Stimmen der Zeit* 182 (1968) pp. 1-15.

28. It is noteworthy that much before the idea of representative government was thought and talked about in the political field, the Medieval canonists were considering it basing themselves on the Christian ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. But with the beginning of the crisis of the Reformation, such emerging thoughts were abandoned.

On the one hand, we should readily concede that the Church not a society based on the sovereignty of the people, formed by the work of men and women who as a society give to themselves certain constitution and lay down rights and duties to be mutually respected and govern themselves through a democratic system. For, the Church is the work of grace, a creation of the Spirit. Moreover, there can be perversion of democracy when a brute majority wants to thrust its will and decisions on a legal, juridical and constitutional basis and fails to respect the will of the minorities.

On the other hand, we cannot deny that there is a deeper affinity between democratic values and the message of the Gospel. This explains also how, as we mentioned earlier, historically the germs of modern political democracy were provided by the ideal of Christian brotherhood and freedom. The Church is the community of the believers who are freed by the freedom of Christ (Gal 5:1); in it there is an equality which transcends natural or ethnical barriers (Rom 14:15) and social divisions (Gal 3:26-29) of high and low, superior and inferior, master and slave, rich and poor<sup>29</sup> (James 2:2-4). This freedom and equality exists in the midst of diversity and pluralism.

In a community of believers where the dignity and equality of all are guaranteed on the deeper sacramental foundation, there can be only the conviction that democracy as a system in its formal and juridical aspects is *too little and falls far short of the democratic values* to be realised in its life as an ideal of brotherhood, communion, collegiality and consensus in faith. It is not a question of rejecting *in toto* the idea of democracy as alien to Christianity. *The real challenge is to realise the democratic values in the Church community in a way that goes beyond what juridical and constitutional means succeed in doing.* This does not exclude adopting certain concrete democratic forms to realise in an eminent way the ideal of communion and brotherhood and to maximize the participation of the laity. No one need think that these forms are only expression of people's will and not of God. In fact, just as the reconciliation with God takes place by the sign of the reconciliation of a person with his brother with the Church community, so too the consensus or agreement arrived at by certain democratic forms can be the expression of God's will.

This can be clearly seen in the tradition and practice of the

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29. Cf. R. PRACH, "The New Testament Foundations of a Democratic Form of Life in the Church," in *Concilium* vol. 3, no. 7 (1971), pp. 48-59.

Church during the first half of its history. In the *Traditio Apostolica*, we hear Hippolytus speaking of the election of deacons, presbyters and bishops by the Church community.<sup>30</sup> One may not argue that there is no connection between electing and the will of God. That the will of God is manifested by the testimony of the people in the appointment of office-bearers is clearly borne out by Cyprian: "Moreover Cornelius was made bishop by the judgement of God and of his Christ, by the testimony of almost all the people who were then present and by the assembly of ancient priests and good men."<sup>31</sup> When the Cardinals elect the bishop of Rome by casting votes, is not God's will for his Church made known through the ballot?

Because the ministers are to serve the community and bear responsibility for its growth, Pope Leo the Great underlined the need of getting the consent of the people in their regard: "Let him who will stand before all be elected by all" (*Qui praefuturus est omnibus ab omnibus eligatur*).<sup>32</sup> All this underlines a deep ecclesiological vision in which the laity play a decisive role.

What is important is not so much the question of elections as the respect for the people of God, the recognition of their dignity and responsibility in the Church which such practices of the early Church reveal. A deep pneumatological vision of the Church underlies them. Sometimes it is argued that these practices with the involvement of the laity were possible in the early Church, but may not be applicable to us today in our complex situation. The assumption here is that the early Church was an "ideal Church", which is not true. The early Church is often portrayed in such a light that one imagines that every one then was a saint! The saints and martyrs of the early Church are known. What is not so well known is that there were many apostates, many divisions, conflicts and struggles which seriously endangered the unity of the Church.<sup>33</sup>

What is remarkable is that in spite of all these difficulties and struggles in the concrete experience of the Christian community, the

30. *Traditio Apostolica* 2,7,8.

31. *P.L.* vol. 4, 317-318.

32. *Epist.* X, 4, *P.L.* vol. 54, 634; cf. J. GAUDEMET, et alii, *Les elections dans l'Eglise latine, des origins au XVIe siecle*, Paris T. Lanore 1979; R. Grayson, "Les Elections ecclesiastiques au IIIe siecle," in *Revue d'histoire ecclesiastique* 68 (1973) pp. 353-402; *ibid.*, "Les elections episcopales en Orient au IVe siecle," *ibid.*, vol. 74, (1979), pp. 301-345; H.M. LEGRAND, "Theology and the Elections of Bishops in the Early Church," in *Concillium*, vol. 7, no. 8 (1972), pp. 31-42.

33. The conflicts and divisions begin already during the apostolic period: cf. R.E. BROWN, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, New York, Paulist Press, 1984.

responsibility of the laity in the life of the Church was clear and given a concrete expression. The Church understood that despite the ambivalence of human freedom—which is applicable both to the clergy and the laity—the Christian community is a brotherhood, a fellowship in which the laity assume a responsible role as believers. It may be difficult to argue that the example of the early Church does not apply to us.

The example of the early Church rather challenges us today. In an age when the awareness of the dignity of the human person, rights and freedom is growing sharper in the secular world, there is a more stringent obligation on the part of the Church to incorporate them within the framework of the Church as communion and brotherhood. It would be contrary to the spirit of the Gospel if the invoking of the ideal of communion and brotherhood is meant to blanket the freedom and the dignity of the laity and their effective participation in the life of the Church. If brotherhood and communion which are meant to ensure human dignity and freedom are not given tangible and concrete expression, as noted earlier, the pressure to adopt within the Church a democratic system after the secular model will increase.

All this makes us realize the importance of a pneumatological vision. In a christomonistic perspective the idea of representation of Christ and authority assume such an important place that it cannot be reconciled with the true freedom, equality and dignity of all the believers. Such values would be thought as prejudicial to the nature of the Church and undermining the authority invested in the hierarchy by the Jesus of history. On the other hand, a pneumatological perspective which includes within it the core of Jesus' message of brotherhood, love and communion, as well as the role of authority and ministry, will not only be open to freedom and equality but also find the Gospel values reflected in them. This will lead to a greater decentralization in the organisation of the Church life, a sharing of responsibility and to effective and responsible ways of enlisting the participation of the laity in the Church.

*(Parts II and III will be published in December)*

# Rome Accepts Liberation Theology

George V. Lobo, S.J.

**T**HE Judeo-Christian revelation is an experience of liberation, and the Bible, Old and New Testament, is a theology or theologies of liberation. The Church continues to experience liberation and expresses this in doctrinal formulations, theological systematizations or just spontaneous reflections.

Liberation implies the existence of an oppression which organizes itself in unjust structures. Hence there is a continual struggle between the movement of liberation and the contrary power of oppression. The first could deviate from its Christian moorings and inspiration while the second could mask itself under the appearance of orthodoxy and piety. Hence great discernment is needed in the concrete expressions of liberation.

The modern age is characterized, among other things, by the global and massive subjugation of the underprivileged at the local, regional and international levels. This has manifested itself in a peculiar manner in the group of countries in Central and South America called Latin America. The terrible experience of oppression and the poignant urge for liberation has led to the reinterpretation of the Bible, not from an academic perspective, but from the lived experience of the people, clearly under the inspiration of the Spirit. As the greatest single movement of liberation in the modern era is Marxism, it had to have an influence in the process. The Marxist analysis has provided a valuable tool to discern the exact mechanisms of oppression and to suggest concrete means of liberation, although from the overall perspective the Marxist influence on liberation theology has been quite secondary as compared to that of the Bible.

Liberation theology of Latin America is an articulation of an experience that is essentially Christian. It is not a closed or precise system, but rather a complex of trends and currents which have been viewed in Europe and elsewhere according to the prism of the viewer. It is understandable that certain aspects have looked dangerous and even unorthodox, although unorthodoxy is largely the bogey raised by vested interests that feel threatened by the prospect of the emancipation of the masses.



Still, some caution was in order and hence it is not surprising that we had the 1984 document<sup>1</sup> which was rather censorious in tone, but in fact already accepted the basic legitimacy of some liberation theology. It promised another document that would set forth more clearly the positive Christian doctrine on freedom and liberation. This second document, published on 22 March 1986, more than satisfies one's expectations. Whatever its limitations, it definitely accepts the validity of liberation theology, as it has developed in Latin America. It declares: "The Church of Christ makes these aspirations (of liberation) her own, while exercising discernment in the light of the Gospel which is *by its very nature a message of freedom and liberation*" (1).

The document is of supreme pastoral import. Now there can be no hesitation in interpreting the Bible as a message of liberation, in proclaiming the human and Christian value of liberation, in catechetical initiation to true liberation, in celebrating the sacraments as high points of the Christian experience of liberation, and in strenuously striving for actual liberation from all oppressive and unjust structures. The cautions and warnings of the Magisterium can no more be used as an excuse for not adopting a radical change of perspective. There is no more any justification for covert or overt support of the established oppressive structures in the name of religion and piety.

### *Relation to Older Documents*

Nearly all the points made in the document are familiar as they are found in earlier documents. However, here they have been given a unique focus and synthesis. There are some ambiguities and regressions. But the overall thrust is clear. We are given a clarion call to march ahead, take one more step in the great movement of humanity towards liberation. The meaning of the document becomes clear when it is examined in the light of older documents of the last quarter of a century which have made their contribution to the Church's teaching on liberation, although they did not have liberation as their central theme.

*Mater et Magistra*, 1961, of John XXIII called upon the faithful to involve themselves vigorously in the socio-political life in order to preserve the integrity of religion and morals and to promote the com-

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1. *Libertatis Nuntius*, Instruction of the S.C. for the Doctrine of the Faith on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation," 6 August 1984, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 76 (1984) 862-77.

mon good. Then a few weeks before his death in 1963, the same Pope, in *Pacem in Terris*, invited "all men of good will" to defend human rights. He showed a certain openness to socialist currents by distinguishing between "false philosophical teachings" and "historical movements" originating from them (159). However, these two documents failed to investigate the underlying causes of the violation of human rights, namely, the unjust structures of modern society.

The Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, of Vatican II on the Church in the Modern World, 1965, proposed a holistic vision of man and society, and thus it laid the basis for a reflection on the relationship between the Christian faith and human liberation and progress. There was to be no separation between spiritual salvation and human activity. The Council reversed the presentation of the Church's teaching on private property. What is basic is the "universal destination of material goods," the right to private property being secondary (69). *Gaudium et Spes* also established the basis for human rights in the inviolable dignity of the human person, made in the image of God. However, the document has a heavy Western bias and fails to address itself to the urgent problems of the Third World.

This is made up to some extent by *Populorum Progressio*, 1967, of Paul VI. The Pope emphatically affirms the rights of the poor for the necessities of life. He condemns in the same breath collectivism and liberal capitalism, as well as the "international economy of money" (26). He calls for urgent reforms in feudal structures and "bold transformations and innovations that go deep" (32). Even violent uprisings, although strongly discouraged, are not altogether ruled out (31). However, the document largely remained at the "developmental" phase of social thinking, not adverting to the need for a radical transformation of unjust structures.

In the Apostolic Letter *Octagesima Adveniens*, to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, 1971, Pope VI shows anxiety at the danger of compromise with materialistic and deterministic trends in Marxism (31-34). However, for the first time he stresses the need for social analysis (4) and calls for a change in attitudes and structures (45).

The 1971 Synod of Bishops issued a vibrant call to *Justice in the World*. By calling action on behalf of justice a "constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel," it shows the essential link between "the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive structure" (6). This, toge-

ther with the statement of the Pope in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, following on the 1974 Synod on Evangelisation, completely transcends the false dichotomy between spiritual salvation and human liberation. The 1971 Synod also spells out the pastoral action for justice, whether it be by a witness to evangelical values which are countercultural in a competitive, consumerist and exploitative society (39, 47), or an education to justice in the family and school (54) or through the meaningful celebration of the liturgy (58).

John Paul II has elaborated his social message based on the dignity of the human person made to the image of God right from his first programmatic encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, 1979. His main contribution to social doctrine is *Laborem Exercens*, 1981, in which he presents a Christian vision of man and work. It is interesting to note that some of the main points he makes, such as "man's primacy over work" (6-7) and the primacy of labour over capital (12) have striking affinities with Marxism.<sup>2</sup>

After this general background, specific points in the new document will be discussed in relation to previous documents and future orientations for action.

### *Analysis of the Present Situation*

The document notes modern man's quest for freedom and the aspiration to liberation which have their first source in the Christian heritage. Science, technology, social and political trends towards equality and human rights, and freedom of thought contribute to the liberation of man, but are said to be ambiguous in themselves. They can well lead to new and more terrible forms of servitude and oppression on the individual, group or wider level. While it is true that the best things can be abused, the document could have evaluated the modern trends and achievements in a more positive way.

The relationship of inequality and oppression between the more and less powerful nations has been recognized (16), but not as clearly as in earlier documents.<sup>3</sup> The emancipation of dependent peoples gets a very negative treatment. The frustrations after a hard-won independence seems to be exclusively attributed to local tyrannies (17). Neo-colonial machinations through multinationals, subversion, military,

2. See J. KOTTUKAPALLY, "Marxism in Recent Vatican Documents", *Vidya-jyoti*, 50 (1986) 260-264.

3. See my book, *Moral and Pastoral Questions*, Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1983, Ch. 10, "The Church and Neo-colonialism", pp. 152-154.

social and economic pressures which perpetuate or aggravate the subjection should have been noted. Incidentally, this is also the weakness of much that goes by the name of "social analysis." Examining local structures of oppression will not give the real picture unless the deep workings of neocolonialism are uncovered.

The root of the tragedy today is said to be the alienation from God. However, God at times appears in the document as a Being apart, and not as the very Ground of human existence.

### *The Meaning of Sin*

The document affirms that the fundamental meaning of liberation is freedom from the radical bondage of evil and sin (23). Sin is said to be the separation from God and the root of human alienation (37). By seeking undue autonomy and self-sufficiency, man denies God and himself. "Alienation from the truth of his being as a creature loved by God is the root of all the other forms of alienation" (38). Having become his own centre, sinful man tends "to treat others as objects or instruments and thus contributes to the creation of those very structures of exploitation and slavery which he claims to condemn" (43).

However, there still seems to be some allergy to the concept of social sin. It is true that sin has an essentially personal dimension and one cannot shirk one's personal responsibility for evil deeds by taking refuge under the idea of sinful structures or of psycho-social conditioning. Psychic and social factors can only influence, not determine the will.<sup>4</sup> No one can be compelled to commit a personal sin. But this is no reason why "social sin" or "sinful structures" should be called sin "only in derived and secondary sense" (75). In the Bible it is clear that the term "sin" (*hamartia*) is used for a power of evil transcending the individual will of man. It is this *hamartia* that is manifesting itself in sinful deeds. Current reflection is only giving "name and form" to the *hamartia* by spelling it out in terms of concrete evil structures which are not only external, but insidious workings of evil in the world.

Hence there seems to be some regression from the more holistic approach of *Gaudium et Spes* where the aspects of the personal and the social are better balanced. Perhaps we can understand the over-

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4. See my work, *Christian Living according to Vatican II*, Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1982, pp. 404-410.

stress on the personal in the document, and even more in the earlier one on Liberation, as the anxiety to counter collectivist and deterministic trends in certain quarters.

In this connection, we may note that atheism is one-sidedly attributed to the audacity of the sinner claiming false autonomy and emancipation. *Gaudium et Spes* had made a more refined analysis of the different causes of atheism which include "a critical reaction against religious beliefs", especially when they are presented inadequately and seem to go against the dignity and welfare of man. The Council even affirms: "Believers themselves frequently bear some responsibility for this situation", when they "conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God and religion" (19).

### *Liberation, a Biblical Theme*

The 1984 document had clearly recognized that liberation is a Christian theme with strong biblical foundations (III, 1-10) and hence the expression "theology of liberation" is a "thoroughly valid one" (III, 4). It traced the development of the theme in the Old and New Testaments. This has been further elaborated in Chapter 3 of the new document.

In the Exodus, Yahweh appears as a God of liberation who rescues His People from economic, political and cultural slavery to lead them to liberty and communion with Him (44). The Law is meant to promote justice inspired by Love (45). The prophets condemn injustice, uphold the right of the poor and announce a New Covenant where God will change hearts by imprinting on them the Law of the Spirit (46). The psalms and later prophets comfort the "Poor of Yahweh" who adhere to justice and fidelity against heavy odds (47). It would have been good to speak also of the significance of the Jubilee in Lev 25.

In the New Testament, Jesus the Son of God who has made himself poor for love of us, proclaims the Good News of Liberation to the poor (50). He gives a new meaning to suffering through the paschal mystery (51) and has radically brought about reconciliation (52) and has given the new Law of the Spirit which transforms human relationships (54). He has given us the New Commandment, the gift of the Spirit, which embraces both love of God and of the neighbour. The relationship between the two has been stressed, but their unity could have been brought out.<sup>5</sup> If man is the "image of

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5. Cf. *op. cit.* pp. 172-173.

God" (Gen 1:27) and the "the glory of God is man fully alive,"<sup>6</sup> there is no room for any shadow of dichotomy in this matter.

Here we may note some important omissions. John's vision of "a new heaven and new earth" (Rev 21:1-4) could have been referred to in treating of the "eschatological hope and commitment to temporal liberation" (60). However, the most surprising omission is that of Christ's inaugural or programmatic speech at the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4:18-21), which provides a holistic vision of salvation and liberation. It is interesting to note that Pope John Paul II referred to this text quite a few times in his speeches in India.

### *Liberating Mission of the Church*

The document reaffirms the firm determination of the Church "to respond to the anxiety of contemporary man as he endures oppression and yearns for freedom" (61). It brings out the relevance of the Gospel as "the power of eternal life" and of the Beatitudes as the required attitudes of those who would commit themselves to social change (62).

The document follows Vatican II<sup>7</sup> in describing the essential mission of the Church as of evangelisation and salvation (63). In line with the 1971 Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the document affirms that this includes the promotion of justice. The Church is supposed to take great care "to maintain clearly and firmly the unity and the distinction between evangelisation and human promotion" (64). Her mission is not to be reduced to temporal preoccupations. The Gospel the Church proclaims brings healing and elevation to human life (64). Here the holistic perspective is maintained, but there seems to be excessive caution.

The example of Jesus inspires a *preferential love for the poor* (66-68).<sup>8</sup> In spite of the failings of many of her members, the Church has not ceased to exercise this love through works of charity, relief, defence and liberation. "She has sought to promote structural changes in society so as to secure conditions of life worthy of the human person" (68). If the last claim is not so true of the past, it should be taken at least as an indication for the future.

Here it is good to see that the new *basic communities* have been

6. Cf. St IRENEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, 7; V, 6, 1.

7. *Lumen Gentium*, 17; *Ad Gentes*, 1.

8. Special reference is made to *Octagesima Adventiens*, 4 and the opening address of JOHN PAUL II at Puebla, III, 7, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 71 (1979) 203,

praised. It is said that if they function rightly, "their experience, rooted in a commitment to the complete liberation of man, becomes a treasure for the whole Church" (69). However, if such communities are to play their role, their spontaneity will have to be respected. While they should not be alienated from the normal Church structures or be antagonistic to them, no attempt should be made to discipline or institutionalize them.

### *Theological Reflection*

The first document expressed grave misgivings regarding the new trend in theologising from *orthopraxis* in place of the traditional *orthodoxy*. It spoke disparagingly of "that current of thought which proposes a novel interpretation of both the content of faith and of Christian experience which seriously departs from the Church and, in fact, actually constitutes a practical negation" (VI, 9). The ensuing discussion showed that none of the concrete expressions of "liberation theology" in Latin America could come under this description! So the condemnation was at best a warning not to tend in that direction.

The new document, on the contrary, remarks that "a theological reflection developed from a particular experience can constitute a very positive contribution, inasmuch as it makes possible a highlighting of aspects of the Word of God, the richness of which had not yet been fully grasped" (70).

However, the theologian is cautioned to proceed from the light of the experience of the Church herself, particularly as it manifests itself in the lives of the saints and to be subject to the discernment of the Church authority. Here it is not clear what is meant by "Church" and "saints." Are not Christian groups and persons inspired by the Gospel and struggling selflessly for the reign of God's truth and justice to be called "Church" and "saints"?

### *Social Analysis*

The document declares that "as an expert in humanity," the Church offers by her social doctrine a set of *principles for reflection and criteria for judgment and directions for action* (74). The basic criteria for discernment are to be found in Scripture and the Fathers, and to some extent in the great medieval doctors. But their elaboration is to be found only in recent Church documents. In the meanwhile, Marx introduced what is called a "scientific analysis." In

Marxism itself, this is integrally bound up with a materialistic and deterministic ideology. But it is not impossible to abstract certain rational elements which do not become untrue just because they have been first developed and used by Marx. They stand or fall at the bar of reason.

The older social documents of the Church, especially the first document on liberation, expressed strong misgivings about this scientific analysis.<sup>9</sup> It was considered inseparable from the ideology of Marx (VI, 6)<sup>9</sup>. This was far from evident to many.<sup>10</sup> The new document does not repeat these misgivings, although in the Introduction it is said that the two documents are to be read in the light of each other (2). Instead, it provides basic criteria for judgment on social situations, structures and systems, namely, *man's dignity*, the principle of *solidarity* and the principle of *subsidiarity* (73-74). The *primacy of persons* over structures is also to be respected (75).

### *Christian Practice of Liberation*

This is putting into practice the great commandment of love, which is the supreme principle of Christian social morality (71). The resources of human wisdom and the sciences are to be used. The technical aspects of problems are to be taken into account, but always judging them from the moral point of view (72). Because of changing circumstances, the Church's teaching involves "contingent judgments." It is open to new questions and requires the contribution of all charisms, experiences and skills (72).

The document lays emphasis on the need for inner conversion of heart. However, this does not eliminate the need for changing unjust structures. But new structures by themselves are incapable of securing the good. Moral integrity is indispensable. At this stage we find a very balanced statement: "It is therefore necessary to work *simultaneously* for the conversion of hearts and for the improvement of structures." (75). If this were accepted, many of the sterile debates on this question would be ended. Unfortunately, the document itself does not always maintain this balance.

### *Revolution and Violence*

The document declares that "situations of grave injustice require

9. Cf. also *Octagesima Adveniens*, 34.

10. See. E. D'LIMA, "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation': a Theological Reflection", *Vidyajyoti*, 49 (1985) 365-367; KOTTUKAPALLY, "Liberation Theology and Marxism", *ibid.* pp. 353-355.



the courage to make far-reaching reforms" (78). But it scoffs at the "myth of revolution." The first document had attacked the belief that revolutionary violence would *ipso facto* bring about true liberation. Here revolution itself seems to be frowned upon. The preference for "gradualism" does not take into account the extreme urgency of changing the unjust and oppressive structures in the world. To that extent, there is a regression if compared to *Justice in the World* and even *Populorum Progressio*. Asserting that revolution tends to encourage the setting up of totalitarian regimes does not show awareness of the "capitalist encirclement" and the deliberate "radicalisation of a regime" provoked by vested interests within and without. This is what happened in Cuba, Chile and so many other countries.

On the other hand, the document takes a remarkable step in acknowledging the legitimacy of armed struggle as a last resort. *Populorum Progressio* had recognized this in a parenthesis: "A revolutionary uprising—save when there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country—produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disorders" (31). This was the only text in this line barring an obscure one from Pius XI<sup>11</sup>.

The present document declares that the Church's Magisterium admits recourse to armed struggle "as a last resort to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny which is gravely damaging the fundamental rights of individuals and the common good" (79). A concrete application of this principle would, of course, need extreme caution and most careful discernment, since today, as the document says, "passive resistance" offers a way more conformable to moral principles and having no less prospects for success. In any case, "crimes such as reprisals against the general population, torture, or methods of terrorism and deliberate provocation aimed at causing deaths during popular demonstration" can never be approved, whether perpetrated by established power or by insurgents. Likewise to be avoided are smear campaigns destroying a person psychologically or morally. This is done more by vested interests, national and international, since they control the media and have perfected the art of disinformation.

So now the principle regarding the use of violence in different

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11. Encyclical "Nos es muy concida", *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 29 (1937) 208-209.

forms is clear. "Passive resistance" or *satyagraha* is to be always preferred. Violent resistance can only be a last resort justified by the right of countering the violence let loose by the oppressor. Depersonalising methods can never be justified.

### *Theology of Work*

In stressing the dignity of work sanctified by Christ, the main insights of *Laborem Exercens* are recalled. The respect due to the worker and the right relationship between the human person and work, recognizing the primacy of the first, call for a profound change in the people's outlook and in institutional and political structures (83). This is particularly relevant in countries like India.

The primacy of work over capital dictates the obligation upon employers to consider the welfare of the worker before the increase of profit (87).

### *Promotion of Solidarity*

International solidarity, based on human and supernatural brotherhood and leading to responsibility in aiding underdeveloped countries (90-91) is spoken of in simplistic terms compared to the more pungent statements of several earlier documents. We can no more be naive and fail to see that what goes by the name of aid is often a form of gross exploitation.

However, this document alone cannot be faulted on this score, since there is general lack of awareness, even among many "liberationists" of the insidious and all-pervading workings of neo-colonial structures which are closely linked with local vested interests. There is need for a profound analysis of these structures and a bold plan of action to combat them.<sup>12</sup>

### *Cultural and Educational Tasks*

The document does well in highlighting the importance of culture in social change. It stresses cultural freedom and the right to education for all (92). It calls for education in the responsible use of cultural freedom. It warns against discrimination and injustice on the basis of culture and the marginalisation of people which is one of the most glaring injustices of our time (95). The challenge of in-

12. Cf. my above cited book, *Moral and Pastoral Questions*, ch. 10. "The Church and Neo-colonialism."

culturation for the Church herself is briefly touched upon (96). In all this, the insights of earlier documents are recalled.

The theologian is invited to help the poor to develop their "*sensus fidei*" so that their faith expresses itself clearly and is translated into life (98). As the liberation theologians have been already doing precisely this, the suggestion seems to be addressed to classical theologians who have often been too preoccupied with academic discussions.

The document calls the liberating task "*an ethical requirement*" (99). By calling this primary task, which is the pre-condition for the success for all others, an educational one, it suggests the importance of what liberation theologians call *conscientization*.

### Conclusion

The figure of the humble Virgin of Nazareth, whose heart burst forth in the Magnificat, the Song of Liberation, is fittingly invoked as an inspiration in face of the immensity and complexity of the task of liberation (99-100).

The document hopefully marks the end of a polemical period in the Church regarding the theme of liberation. It opens up the perspective of a cooperative effort to bring about *integral liberation* for all the members of the human society as children of God. At the approach of the centenary of the epoch-making encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII, 1891, it provides a key to understand better the whole rich corpus of the Church's social teaching. It will bear fruit only if its import is grasped by all pastors and educators so that the biblical, catechetical, liturgical, educational and social apostolates are all seen as facets of the integral liberation of people and of the human society.

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"The two Instructions on the Theology of Liberation do not render the work of theologians superfluous, but present them with a challenge, offering orientations and opening perspectives."

—Cardinal J. Ratzinger to the Bishops of Peru

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# A Bishop for All Seasons

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**F**ROM the beginning of Christianity, bishops and other church officials have had dealings with government officials. Cooperation, compromise, capitulation, confrontation—all of these singly or in a mix have marked such dealings. Since the Church and governments are still with us, it may be interesting to look back into history to one encounter between a churchman and a high government official. We may find that such a “flashback” may contain light for us in our own situation.

I will focus on the incident that deals with Ambrose of Milan's encounter with Emperor Theodosius. The story deals with one of the most difficult situations in Ambrose's life. It deals with what was, perhaps, one of the most difficult decisions he had to make.

To understand better what will follow, it may help to remember that at this period Milan was the imperial city. Here the emperor had his residence and here he held court. By this time also the bishops of the Church were important and influential people. Because of their standing in the community bishops had to have many dealings with officials of the government. They could not be ignored. There was also at this time a tussle for power among the emperor's advisors. Some of them were favourable to Ambrose, some were not.

With this background, let us begin with the event that eventually brought on the encounter between two strong-willed men. The story begins in the large and populous town of Thessalonica. In those days the people of the town had to quarter a large number of “barbarian” troops, and they resented it. One day a rather trivial incident caused this resentment to explode. The circus games were approaching and the people of Thessalonica were keen on the games. They were eagerly looking forward especially to the chariot races on which they wagered much and in which they could howl and thump and thrill to their sweaty heart's content. Now the commandant of the town, one Botheric, a Teuton, had done something that displeased the Thessalonian racing fans enormously: he had put into prison one of the popular chariot drivers! The charge? Gross immorality. As the day for the races came near, the boisterous Thessalonians clamoured for the release of their racing hero. Botheric sternly re-

fused to release the charioteer. The people of Thessalonica were not going to let this "barbarian" deny them the pleasure of cheering their hero on the race course. So they barbarously butchered Bothe-ric and dragged his body through the streets.

Theodosius the emperor received this news and he was furious! Emperor that he was, he decided to take a horrible revenge on the people of Thessalonica. Ambrose came to know of the emperor's intention (that was another infuriating element—Ambrose seemed to find out so many things that were discussed and decided in the emperor's privy council) and felt bound to intervene. His presence at the palace was not particularly welcome at this period. A caucus led by one of the emperor's highest officials was hostile to Ambrose. In spite of this Ambrose went to see the emperor and had several interviews with him. In the course of these interviews Ambrose came to know the emperor's concrete plan for punishing the city. Horror-struck, he condemned it as "most atrocious"! Eventually, Ambrose seems to have received some vague assurance from Theodosius that the plan would not be carried out.

But the "caucus" opposed to Ambrose revived the emperor's passion, saying that it would be a fatal policy to let such a crime pass without making an example by punishing the Thessalonians. And their voices prevailed. Theodosius was persuaded to issue a secret order for the slaughter of the Thessalonians—up to a certain number. But his conscience bothered him, and soon after giving the order he countermanded it. The reprieve arrived too late!

Blood was soon to flow at the circus and it would not be the blood of gladiators:

The people of Thessalonica were invited to attend a grand exhibition in the Circus. Not suspecting any treachery, a great multitude assembled, and speedily became absorbed in contemplation of the games. Suddenly, at a given signal, the soldiers rushed in, and began to slaughter. No distinction was made between the guilty and the innocent, or between native inhabitants and strangers: all alike were cut down, "as ears of corn in the time of harvest." The butchery lasted for three hours, and at least 7,000 persons perished. Many pathetic incidents occurred. One devoted slave offered his own life for that of his master. A wealthy merchant tried to bribe the soldiers to kill him in the place of his two sons. They dared not spare both the boys, but agreed to allow the father to substitute himself for one of them. But when asked to point out which of the two he wished to save, the agonized parent found himself unable to make the decision. At last the executioners, losing patience, slew both sons before his eyes.<sup>1</sup>

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1. From *The Life and Times of St Ambrose*, by F. HOMES DUDDEN, Vol. II, Oxford 1935, pp. 382-3.

When news of the massacre reached Ambrose he was presiding over a council of the bishops of Italy and Gaul. Ambrose and all the other bishops were shocked and horrified. All agreed that they could not overlook such a crime. The only question was what action should be taken against the emperor. The question was indeed a difficult one and Ambrose refrained from acting precipitately. We may get some insight into the workings of his own mind on this question from a passage of his treatise *On the Duties of the Clergy* in which he makes the following reflections:

In all that we do we must look to see, not only if it is virtuous, but whether it is possible, so that we do not enter upon anything that we cannot carry out. . . . With what grace must the soul be equipped, and the mind trained and taught to stand firm, so as never to be disturbed by any fears, to be broken by any troubles, or to yield to any torments. . . . It is a sign of natural ability, if a man by the power of his mind can foresee the future, and put as it were before his eyes what may happen, and decide what he ought to do if it should take place. It may happen, too, that he will think over two or three things at once, which he supposes may come either singly or together, and that he settles what he will do with them as he thinks will be to the most advantage, in the event of their coming either singly or together.

Therefore it is the duty of a brave man not to shut his eyes when anything threatens, but to put it before him and to search it out as it were in the mirror of his mind, and to meet the future with foreseeing thought, for fear he might afterwards have to say: This has come to me because I thought it could not come about. If misfortunes are not looked for beforehand, they quickly get a hold over us. In war an unexpected enemy is with difficulty resisted, and if he finds the others unprepared, he easily overcomes them; so evils unthought of readily break down the soul.

In these two points, then, consists the excellency of the soul: so that thy soul, trained in good thoughts, and with a pure heart, first, may see what is true and virtuous (for "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"), and may decide that only to be good which is virtuous; and, next, may never be disturbed by business of any kind, nor get tossed about by any desires.<sup>2</sup>

Ambrose needed time to determine his course. Divine Providence seems to have conspired to give him the time. The emperor was away from Milan when the news of the massacre was published. He stayed in Verona from August to September. A few days before the emperor was to return to Milan, Ambrose decided to leave the city on the plea that he needed a change of air because of an illness that he was suffering. It was not just an excuse, he was genuinely ill. He

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2. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Vol. X, 1969<sup>1</sup>, p. 32.

went to some unknown place in the countryside. There in his lonely retreat he must have agonized over the decision he had to take: it is difficult to confront, and even more to punish, a person for whom one feels a real affection. And Ambrose did feel affection for Theodosius the man.

Once away from Milan, Ambrose seems to have reached his decision fairly quickly. He may have been helped by a dream that he had the night before he left the city. Ambrose dreamt that he was saying mass in the cathedral, and that Theodosius came in, and after that Ambrose found himself powerless to offer the sacrifice. The emperor returned to Milan about the eighth of September. On the 10th Ambrose wrote personally a letter that was intended only for the eyes of Theodosius. The letter so reveals the depths of the man, that I quote it here:

"I bear an affectionate and grateful memory of your former friendship towards me, and of your great condescension in so often granting favours to others at my request. You may be sure, then, that it was not ingratitude which induced me to avoid your presence, which hitherto I have ever sought with the greatest eagerness I will briefly explain my reasons for so doing.

"I found that I alone of all your Court was denied the right of hearing what was going on, that I might also be deprived of the privilege of speaking; for you were frequently annoyed at my having received intelligence of decisions taken in your Consistory. Wherefore I modestly did my best to conform to your imperial will. I tried to spare you annoyance by endeavouring that no information concerning the imperial decisions should reach me. But I could not close my ears with wax, as men did in the old stories: nor, when I did hear, could I be silent. That would be the most miserable thing of all—to have one's conscience bound and one's lips closed. As the Scriptures tell us, if the priest warn not the sinner, the sinner shall die in his sin, and the priest also shall be punished, because he did not warn him.

"Listen, August Emperor. You have zeal for the faith, I own it; you have fear of God, I confess it. But you have a vehemence of temper, which, if soothed, may speedily be changed into compassion, but which, if inflamed, becomes so violent that you can scarcely restrain it. I would to God that those about you, even if they do not moderate it, would at least refrain from stimulating it! This vehemence I have preferred secretly to commend to your consideration

rather than run the risk of stirring it up by a public act. So I have preferred to seem somewhat slack in the discharge of my duty rather than lacking in respect to my sovereign; and that others should blame me for failure to exercise my priestly power rather than that you should consider me, who am most loyal to you, deficient in reverence. This I have done that you might be free to choose for yourself in calmness the course which you ought to follow.

"A deed has been perpetrated at Thessalonica, which has no parallel in history; a deed which I in vain attempted to prevent; a deed which, in the frequent expostulations which I addressed to you beforehand, I declared would be most atrocious; a deed which you yourself, by your later attempt to cancel it, have confessed to be heinous. This deed I could not extenuate. When the news of it first came, a Council was in session on account of the arrival of bishops from Gaul. All the assembled bishops deplored it; not a single one viewed it indulgently. Your act could not be forgiven even if you remained in the communion of Ambrose; on the contrary the odium of the crime would fall even more heavily on me, if I were not to declare to you the necessity of becoming reconciled to our God.

"Are you ashamed, Sir, to do as did David, who was a prophet as well as a king, and an ancestor of Christ according to the flesh? He, when he had listened to the parable of the poor man's ewe lamb, recognized that he himself was condemned by it and cried, *I have sinned against the Lord*. Do not, Sir, take it ill if the same words are addressed to you which the prophet addressed to David—*Thou art the man*. For if you give careful heed to them, and answer, *I have sinned against the Lord*; then to you also shall it be said, *Because thou repentest, the Lord hath put away thy sin*.

"This I have written, not to confound you, but to induce you, by quoting a royal precedent, to put away this sin from your kingdom. You may do that by humbling your soul before God. You are a man, and temptation has come to you; now get the better of it. Tears and penitence alone can take away sin. Neither angel nor archangel can do it. Nay, the Lord Himself grants no remission of sin except to the penitent.

"I advise, I entreat, I exhort, I admonish. It grieves me that you, who were an example of singular piety, who exercised consummate clemency, who would not suffer individual offenders to be placed in jeopardy, should not mourn over the destruction of so many innocent persons. Successful as you have been in war, and worthy of praise in



other respects, yet piety has ever been the crown of your achievements. The devil has grudged you your chief excellence—overcome him, while you have the means. Add not sin to sin by following a course which has proved the ruin of many.

"For my part, debtor as I am to your goodness in all other things, grateful as I must ever be for it—for your goodness has surpassed that of many emperors, and indeed has been equalled only by one—for my part, I say, though I have no ground for supposing that you will show yourself contumacious, still I am not free from apprehension. I dare not offer the Sacrifice, if you determine to attend. For can it possibly be right, after the slaughter of so many, to do that which may not be done after the blood of only one innocent person has been shed? No, I cannot!

"I write with my own hand what I wish to be read by yourself alone. Doubtless you desire to be approved by God. You shall make your oblation when you have been given liberty to sacrifice, when your offering will be acceptable to God. Would it not be a delight to me to enjoy the Emperor's favour, and do as he would have me, if the case allowed it? Yet prayer, by itself, is a sacrifice. Prayer obtains pardon, because it indicates humility; but the offering would imply contempt, and would accordingly be rejected. For God Himself assures us that he prefers the keeping of His commandment to sacrifice. Do, therefore, that which you know to be better for the time.

"You have my love, my affection, my prayers. If you believe that, follow my instructions; if you believe it, acknowledge the truth of what I say; but if you believe it not, at least pardon me for preferring God to my sovereign. August Emperor, may you and your Sacred Offspring enjoy in the greatest happiness and prosperity, perpetual peace!"<sup>3</sup>

If one has a sense of drama, one can imagine Ambrose alone writing in his country house; and Theodosius receiving the letter in his palace in the city. What were the thoughts, the feelings, the reactions of these two mighty men? In fact, we know very little. Some ancient historians elaborated stories to exalt Ambrose and his confrontation with the emperor. The stories bear witness to the writers' dramatic talents. Unfortunately, the actions attributed to the actors of the drama are not much in keeping with the known characters of

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3. DUDDEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-386.

both the bishop and the emperor. I myself prefer to follow the lead of more recent historical studies and reconstruct what occurred in the following way.

After an interval of time Ambrose returned to Milan. He did not meet the emperor. Theodosius did not reply to the letter, nor did he risk a public encounter with Ambrose by going to the cathedral. But, with all his faults, Theodosius had a religious sense and could not easily bear the fact of being banned from the Eucharist. Knowing that Ambrose was a determined man, and knowing in his heart of hearts that the bishop was right, the emperor sent one of his high advisors to find out what was to be done. It seems that the public penance of the emperor was reduced to a period of a few weeks. Theodosius was allowed to be present at the Sacred Mysteries, but not to receive Communion. He laid aside his emperor's garb as a sign of mourning, and publicly in the church entreated the prayers of all and pardon for his sin. He was solemnly readmitted to communion on the feast of Christmas.

A recent historian has called this incident, "the beginning of a new relationship between Church and State," because a bishop dared to assert his spiritual authority over a secular prince, and the prince recognized that authority as higher than his own and submitted himself to it. This may be true. And yet, for me, the incident has a more profound ecclesial meaning. From this time on, the *personal relations* between Ambrose and Theodosius took a new turn. Formerly the emperor had taken offence at Ambrose's independent bearing, he resented the bishop's "interference" in matters that seemed none of his business, he tried to keep the deliberations of his Privy Council secret from Ambrose. In A.D. 390 however, he came to understand the real greatness of the man whom he had considered a "meddler". From this time Theodosius adopted a new attitude towards Ambrose. He did not become "subservient" to the bishop, as some writers suppose, but he did take him fully into his confidence. That the later ecclesiastical policy of Theodosius was largely guided by the advice of Ambrose is almost certain. There is a saying attributed to Theodosius, which if not historical, has an authentic ring. The emperor is reported to have said: "I know no one except Ambrose who deserves the name of bishop."

*Conclusion*

The Church is built by personal relationships, and the one who dwells in those relationships to make them personal is none other than the Spirit of God Himself. That Spirit dwells in the heart of each human being—yes, even in the hearts of government officials and seeming “enemies” of the Church.

The story narrated above and what went on between Bishop Ambrose and Emperor Theodosius furnishes us with much to reflect upon. It also gives us indications as to possible ways of action. Perhaps what Virgil says in the *Aeneid* is applicable here: “It may be that a time will come when to remember this will be a help.”

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

With regret we announce that the annual subscription to VIDYAJYOTI for 1987 will be: for India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Rs 35. (Seminarians Rs 30). For Sri Lanka, Rs 70 (Indian currency). For other foreign countries last year's increased rates of US \$ 12 will remain (air mail surcharge: US \$ 10).

We earnestly request our subscribers to pay the yearly subscription in time, i.e. *at the beginning of the year* (or immediately after the previous subscription has lapsed). We are sorry to note that around 20% of the subscribers have not yet paid the 1986 subscription. This causes the management of the Journal serious difficulties. *We are grateful for all the support received from our readers, in whatever form.*

*Management*

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# Notes

## **Towards a Contextualised Curriculum: An Indian Attempt**

Concern for contextualisation in content and style is definitely not new in India. Since the sixties, thanks to the stimulus that came from the Theological Education Fund, quite a few changes in theological education have been introduced. Some schools merged with others to become united institutions; vernacular was introduced as medium of learning at the university levels; a few exciting experiments in curricula involving new styles of learning, in solidarity with the wider community of church and society, integrating action and reflection, with emphasis on learning and living in intentional communities of discipleship, etc., have also been started.

A national consultation held in Bangalore in 1986 was watershed. It came out of a felt need to thoroughly review the purpose of ministry and revise the structures of ministry, for which change in theological education was understood to be vital. The consultation recognised the need to change the patterns of ministry as well as the structures in theological education. Patterns of ministry and patterns of ministerial training are mutually dependent and mutually transforming.

The report, published jointly by the National Council of Churches and Senate of Serampore, recognised that basically Christian ministry is to be oriented to the needs of the people in the country and implies "a readiness to go out to people where they are." Among other things it said that Christian ministry means "sharing India's search for new meaning for new humanity, not only ministering to people's poverty but also seeking to lead them out of poverty. . . . It means an open-minded encounter with renascent religions of India, a readiness to discern values in and to minister to the intellectual and religious aspirations of those involved in this renaissance, along with its cultic expression. It means learning to minister to people who face new and unprecedented decisions in their political, economic, intellectual, religious and cultural life . . ."

The attempts to learn theology in the language of the people, to do theology in relation to people's struggles and aspirations, to be in solidarity with people as one learns to minister with them were new emphases that caught the imagination of some of the churches and theological schools. Remarkable changes were made in some of the regional seminaries in the South, for example in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu. In North India, where the Hindi language is spoken by more than 200 million and understood by about 400 million people such a radical change in theological education did not happen then. The process that began at that time had to wait till 1986 for reaping the harvest. The Church of North India has

now taken the decisive initiative to start a new seminary for all Hindi-speaking churches, as an ecumenical venture. The seminary was inaugurated on the 12th January 1986. One of the first things that the Governing Council and the proposed faculty have done with some encouragement from the Programme on Theological Education is to hold a consultation for structuring a new curriculum. The active participation of the Catholic Seminary, Vidyajyoti, was a sign of great promise in cooperation in the work of the new seminary. A significant number of church leaders and theological educators participated in the consultation held in September 1985 in New Delhi. Some remarkable results have been produced. The purpose of this report is to share some of the outcome with the wider community of the theological education.

To begin with three principles were agreed:

a. The curriculum must be issue-oriented. It will take the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious, issues of Indian life today and grapple with them in the light of the Christian Gospel, and see how the Gospel can illumine, challenge and transform the context. Each course will have this as an entry point; the whole curriculum will have the Indian reality as its counterpoint.

b. It must be integrated. It will seek to integrate the different disciplines of theological study; action and reflection as well as learning and discipleship. It will combine also residential and extension models of education. The life in the Seminary will be related to the life of the Indian Church and Society.

c. It must be kingdom oriented. Indian society is characterized by poverty, powerlessness and the pluralistic religiosity of the people. Some sections of the people are marginalised by caste and are victimised by unjust and inhuman social processes. Questions of justice, power, human dignity are of vital importance, as they reflect the aspirations of the people. The kingdom, God's promise to every people and all people, is a kingdom of justice and peace, freedom and truth, dignity and community. The gospel is the announcement to the whole world of the coming of this kingdom. Theological education has to be undergirded by the content and scope of God's purpose for the whole world, as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The name of the proposed Seminary is *Satyaniketan*, the abode of truth. Tagore had named the institution of learning that he founded *Shanti Niketan*, the abode of peace or Shalom. "Seeking truth" is what the sages of India have been doing over the ages. Mahatma Gandhi interpreted his own life, and his involvement in the freedom struggle as "Experiments with Truth." He not only experimented with truth but experienced the power of truth, *Satyagraha*. The Indian national emblem incorporates the phrase *Satyam eva jayate*, truth shall win. So the name itself is significant. A Christian theological seminary claiming to stand in the same Indian tradition of searching to grasp truth and be grasped by truth.

It was pointed out that the name is appropriate from the perspective of Christian faith too. We confess Jesus Christ as the truth, the way and the life (John 14:6). Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32), and "If then the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free" (verse 35). The Holy Spirit is "the spirit of truth who will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Christian theology is not seeking a truth that is totally unknown, but a search for comprehending the length and breadth and height and depth of the truth revealed in Jesus Christ. It is a seeking to be gripped by that Truth, and be liberated by that Truth, the person of Jesus Christ. The name of the Seminary itself opens up possibilities for creative theological reflection.

At the consultation, some one had a bright idea. What if we construct the whole curriculum around the theme *Satya*? It was enthusiastically agreed that this can be the overarching and integrating category for the new curriculum. During two days of concentrated work an outline was formulated. Obviously, only a few of all the possible parts of the curriculum could be discussed then. There are obviously areas which overlap with a traditional curriculum. And yet there was something new here, as this approach allowed quite a few authentic Indian religious and social categories to be incorporated into the curriculum. The outline in nine parts (an Indian holy number) looks as follows:

1. *Satyaniketan*: Introduction. The story of the Seminary. The student's experiences and reflections on the theme: discussions based on Gandhiji's Experiments with Truth. The purpose of Theological Education in relation to the mission of the church in North India.
2. *Sat-asat*: Truth and non-truth of Indian reality. Study of some of the concrete issues in India today; socio-political analysis of structures that create poverty, marginalisation, etc., in Indian society; in-depth exposure to such situations; visits to historically significant sites and attempt to relate present realities in the context of Indian history. Preliminary theological reflection with the help of selected passages from the prophets (Amos), epistles (James) and the Gospels (Jesus' teaching).  
A second part of the theme is a similar study in the context of global reality with biblical passages on creation, covenant, etc.
3. *Sat-Marg*: (*Marg* means way. The Indian tradition provides for three *margas* or ways of salvation, those of knowledge, action, devotion).  
Liberation/Salvation struggles and searches in Indian heritage and history (and in the history of Israel), in modern history and new religious movements. Bible passages relating to Exodus and from the letter to Romans.

4. *Param-Sat*: Ultimate reality, the reality of God. God experience in Hinduism, Islam, etc., God in Christian scriptures and tradition; Trinity and *Sat Chit Ananda* (being, consciousness and bliss).
5. *Sat-Guru*: Concept of Guru as teacher, and mediator in religious knowledge and salvation. Jesus Christ the truth, the way and life. Study of Mark in relation to the other Gospels. Life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; Christological issues; Indian interpretation of Christ and expressions in art.
6. *Sat-Atma*: (The True Spirit or the Spirit of Truth). Experience of spirit—*Atman, Brahman*—in Hinduism. Biblical experience—select passages from Genesis, Job, Acts; the Spirit of Truth in St John: the Gift of the Spirit and fruits of the Spirit; charismatic movement in the church.
7. *Sat-Sang*: (The Community of truth). Community in India; Divisive and cohesive forces of caste, festivals and celebrations, *Ashrams* and religious communities; Story of the Indian Church; church union, world Christianity and ecumenical movement, ministry and sacrament. Ethical issues in community, interfaith dialogue and community building. The Mission of the Church. Involvement programmes in the churches and other religious communities will be part of this study.
8. *Sat-Granth*: (Scriptures). The role and authority of scriptures in Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism; the Word and Tradition in Christianity. Interpreting the Bible; Fundamentalism and Biblicism. Devotional use of the Bible.
9. *Sat-yuga*: (The age of truth to come). Future of humanity and creation; Different utopias specially those offered by science and Marxism. The Christian hope, transformation of society, history and creation. Passages from the Prophets and Apocalypse.

Specialised courses would be built into this basic framework, e.g., Hindi, Sanskrit, English, Biblical languages; exegetical studies, pastoral care, etc. The consultation listed about 36 courses, required and optional, dividing them up to nine sections. The temptation to "cover" as much as possible within the three or four years available was evident. It was repeatedly said that theological education and ministerial formation are lifelong processes and the best learning happens in the practice of ministry and therefore *how much* one learns is less important than *how* one learns.

It was also said that the teachers and students together will develop the curriculum in the actual experience of learning together, within the possibilities and limitations of time and resources. One hopes that that process will not stop with the first generation but be the continuing task of *Satyaniketan* for a long time to come.

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Sam AMIRTHAM

### Textbooks for Undergraduate Scripture Study

The purpose of this note is to present to our readers seven recent books which we think may be useful as textbooks at the undergraduate level of theological courses. Reader not doing professional theological studies can also, of course, derive much profit from them.

The title of Kelly's book<sup>1</sup> does not really indicate its content, which gives us much more information about *How* the NT came into existence, *How* it reached the non-Greek-speaking Christians and *How* it influenced the life of the Christian community in its first 500 years of life, than why it exists. The author does draw our attention to that puzzling question of why the early Christians, who had their scriptures (what we call the Old Testament), wrote books at all, and the grounds on which there emerged a canon of specifically Christian sacred literature, the New Testament.

The initial chapters cover that long period and the process of composition of the actual books of the NT, from the Pauline letters up to the last books in the third generation of the Christian community. He follows the more widely accepted dates for the various books, and places the Johannine letters and James, Jude and 2 Peter as the latest books. The possibility of placing Ephesians as late as 80-100 I would question. Looking at the book as a textbook, whose object is to give information needed for NT studies, the subsequent chapters are of great value. The author traces clearly and substantially the process by which the *Canon* of the NT was fixed and accepted and the apocryphal books excluded. He then turns his attention to the question of the existing manuscripts of the NT, text criticism and the way scholars fix the more likely original Greek text. Aware of the spread of the Christian community among peoples of various languages he describes the process and type of early translation of the NT. In a final chapter he surveys the influence of the NT in the life of the community over the early centuries. He does not choose the literature of these centuries but three areas of life, Martyrdom Monasticism (spirituality) and Art, and shows how they were deeply influenced by the NT.

There are many other books which cover the same areas of NT studies—the classical work of Kummel, the articles in the JBC and other Introductions. However, not many books focus just on this type of necessary introductory material. The book, written by a teacher, originated in the classroom and is written for non-specialists. The author has taken special care to relate the origin of the NT as canon and its early place in the Christian community to the actual life of the early Church itself. Many students and priests do not possess much of this valuable information which forms background to understand the text. Also, lay persons will ask ques-

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1. *Why is There a New Testament?* By Joseph F. KELLY, London, Geoffrey Chapman 1986, Pp. 200. £ 6.95.



tions whose answers can be easily and adequately found here. A good text book for students of the Bible.

More than twenty-five years ago Russel published *Between the Testaments* which has been reprinted nine times. The subject matter was that important period which spans the 200 years between the end of the OT and the writing of the NT. In the present book<sup>2</sup> he addresses himself to other aspects of this same period so that this work complements his earlier study. The subjects treated here are important: Cultural and Religious Development in the Hellenistic Age; Sources and Scriptures (biblical, non-biblical writing and canonicity); Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism and the New Testament; The Development and Meaning of Torah; Prayer and Meditation (Prayer, Angels, Wisdom, Spirit and Logos); Demonology and the Problem of Evil; The Secret Tradition of Jewish Apocalyptic (study of Apocalyptic); The Future Hope, Messianic Kingdom, Son of man and Resurrection. A bibliography and indices to texts, subjects and modern authors conclude the book.

The subject matter of each chapter has been treated by others in scholarly books and sophisticated Introductions. However Russell, known for his scholarly work on Apocalyptic and a historical study of *The Jews from Alexander to Herod*, has written a precise, informative, clear and useful introductory book on these specific areas of that crucial period in which the Jewish religion grew and developed beyond the OT in diverse and complex circumstances and under a multiplicity of influences. This is the Judaism within which Jesus lived and from which the Christian community and its sacred writings emerged. An adequate initial exposure to various aspects of inter-testamental Judaism is essential to understand the Gospels and other NT writings. This book, along with Russell's earlier work, can serve adequately as a good introduction for undergraduates and seminarians.

My only reservations would be with aspects of his description of the meaning of the Torah in Judaism. He depends too much on the attitude symbolized in Moore's work and not sufficiently on the type of work done recently by Sanders and others. Also, his treatment of the Zealots needs modifications in the light of Horsley's article in NT 27 (1986) 159-192.

The chapter dedicated to biblical interpretation in the OT, rabbinic schools and other Jewish movements, and in the NT is informative and very useful for students. The information given about angels, demonology and the problem of evil will also help to ensure a balanced attitude to these aspects of the NT. His study of Apocalyptic will help in the study of Mark 13 (and parallels), the Book of Revelation and the apocalyptic dimension of NT thought, while his short section on resurrection-judgment gathers together important ideas.

2. From *Early Judaism to Early Church*. By D.S. RUSSELL, London, SCM Press 1986. Pp. 150. £ 4.50.

The author says that he has written for students, ministers and lay persons that they "understand a bit more clearly some of the religious developments that took place within Judaism of roughly 200 BC-AD 100, and what influences these may have had on the mind of Jesus and his followers, on the writing of the Gospels and Epistles and on the ongoing mission of the early church" (Preface). This aim has been admirably achieved. Some will want to investigate this period more in depth and the bibliography will guide them. This makes for a good text book.

We have many reasons to be grateful to Herman Hendricks for a series of really excellent studies.<sup>3</sup> They distil the best of modern Gospel scholarship and grew out of lectures given at the EAPI (Manila), published there between 1975 and 1979. In the Revised Edition the bibliography has been reworked to include important literature omitted earlier and literature published since the first edition. Minor revisions have been made to the text of the *Passion Narrative* and *The Sermon on the Mount*. The text of *Infancy Narratives* has been revised to a greater extent in the light of important studies, especially George Soares-Prabhu's study of Matthew's Infancy narrative, Brown's *Birth of the Messiah*, and Legrand's study of the Annunciation to Mary. The work of Dillon on Luke 24 and other literature has influenced the revision of the *Resurrection Narratives*.

Each book has a brief general introduction to the subject matter. The actual text of the Gospels is studied in detail. The text is divided up into larger units, an introduction is given to each of these units and then an adequate explanation of the author-meaning of the biblical text, verse by verse or a number of verses together according to the nature of the section. The original lectures were given to theology students, religious and catechists and the introductions and explanations are normally simple yet contain and are based upon the best of modern, widely accepted scholarly opinion, interpretation and judgments about these areas of the Gospels. Anyone who reads these books with an open mind will have grasped the nature of the Gospels, and acquired the correct attitudes and basic tools to interpret the remainder of the gospels with the help of good commentaries. These studies are truly educative. At times the author could have expanded his treatment of subtle questions, e.g., Mary's virginity.

A special feature of each book is the final chapter. In *The Sermon on the Mount* the author reflects upon the problem-challenge of "The Practicality of the Sermon on the Mount." In the other books his concern is *preaching* the Infancy, Passion and Resurrection Narratives. His guidelines, remarks and directions would change the quality of many homilies in the two great religious seasons of Lent-Easter and Christmas-Epiphany if the readers were to follow them.

3. *Studies in the Synoptic Gospels*. By Herman HENDRICKX, London, Geoffrey Chapman 1984. There are four books: *Infancy Narratives*, pp. vii-145; *The Sermon on the Mount*, pp. x-210; *Passion Narratives*, pp. x-195; and *Resurrection Narratives*, pp. viii-150. They cost £ 4.50 each.

Too few homilies on these parts of the Gospels bring the living Word of God to people in its depths, richness and challenge.

Each book concludes with suggestions for further reading and an extensive bibliography. Footnotes are minimal, and technical jargon and language are avoided. The text of the Passion narratives (Mt Mk Lk) is presented in parallel columns.

In the commentary on the biblical texts adequate attention is given to the literary ways the gospel writers/Jesus communicated with their audiences (Literary Forms) and the question of Historicity is handled where relevant and necessary. The author follows what is known as the historical critical method in his study of the text. Apart from the final chapter of each book, he has imposed upon himself the limitation of explaining the actual meaning of the text itself. Guidelines for the dialogue between the Word and the Christian community/person in his world today are only taken up in those final chapters. However, the bibliography indicates books and articles where a fuller theology of the Resurrection, discussions on the Kingdom of God, the Teaching of Jesus and his Praxis, the significance of the Passion, can be found. These books enable those not well initiated into contemporary Gospel study to grasp the riches uncovered during these last thirty years and of which the Vatican Council spoke.

I cannot recommend this series too highly. I would make them compulsory reading for all students for the priesthood and students in institutes where the Gospels are studied at any real depth. These are first class text books. Priests who have not been exposed to an adequate and contemporary study of the Gospels could not spend a better Rs. 360/-. The quality of their grasp of the Gospels as a whole and their homilies would qualitatively improve.

The title of our last book<sup>4</sup> indicates that the author has found a friend in Paul. He desires to introduce others, specially those training for ministry, to this great Christian who, he says, cannot be dismissed though some feel uneasy in his presence. The author died before the publication of this tribute to Paul. He has succeeded in making Paul's thought and language easily comprehensible today.

The author begins with a general survey of introductory points concerning the number and nature of Paul's letter—the letter as a literary form—the process of writing—aspects of Paul's life—his knowledge of Jesus—his contribution to Christian thought—the controversies surrounding him—and a short overview of all the letters. The subsequent chapters are introductions to each letter, section by section, together with a discussion of some more problematic questions related to specific letters. The author has summarized clearly the results of good contemporary Pauline scholarship. Each chapter concludes with indications for further reading. Some of the introductions are quite extensive with useful diagrams and valuable infor-

4. *Friend Paul. Letters, Theology, Humanity.* By Neal FLANAGAN, London, Geoffrey Chapman 1986. Pp. 216. £ 7.95.

mation (e.g., the Corinthian letters, pp. 57-98, and Galatians-Romans, pp. 111-164). The author includes 2 Thessalonians, Colossians and Ephesians among Paul's letters.

The purpose of an introduction is to facilitate the reading and comprehension of the actual text. The book serves this purpose adequately and can serve as a fine text book for theological students and others who wish to launch upon the study of Paul. A chapter or indications in each chapter about the way Paul is meaningful for contemporary Christian life would have enhanced its value. The book is the fruit of many hours spent in the classroom and provides the type of information and guidance that an introductory course on Paul would need to cover and so is a good text book.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

### Philosophy

**The Tyranny of Time.** By Robert BANKS. Exeter, The Paternoster Press 1983. Pp. 267. £ 5.95.

All over the world people are presurised by time and speed, and the result is that life is reduced to mechanical impersonal activity. Against this background the present book serves as a timely warning, especially to people whose lives are ruled by technology. The book has two parts. The first part, entitled "The Problem: Time Lost," makes a psycho-social diagnosis, and the second part, entitled "The Solution: Time Regained", proposes a spiritual remedy to enhance the quality of life based on being, not doing, through a transformative process that makes time graceful.

J. MATHIAS, S.J.

**A Philosophical Anthropology. Man: An impossible Project?** By Battista MONDIN. Bangalore, Theological Publications in India. 1985. Pp. vi-279. Np.

This book is published by TPI for the Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana as a text book. There are two major sections

in the book entitled: "Phenomenology of Human" (with subtitles: Life, Knowledge, Self-Consciousness and Objectivity, Freedom, Language Culture and Work), and "Metaphysics of the Human Being" (with subtitles: Self-Transcendence, The spiritual substance: The Soul The Body and Soul, The Person, Survival after Death). The format is that of seminary text book. The book is a Christian European philosophical anthropology. We are not sure whether this meant to be a textbook for Indian seminaries as it would be inadequate in the light of Indian philosophical and cultural traditions and for the formation of Indian priests. The English speaking students of the Urbanianum have been provided with a text book. We hope this has not been to the detriment of the limited resources of the TPI. We are not competent to comment upon the content, the world view, approach and methodology of the book, though the communitarian aspect of the human is not immediately obvious. Its aptness to form priestly students from Asia, Africa and India for their churches would be question in our mind.

P.M.M

# Book Reviews

## Biography

**A Great Indian Jesuit (1897-1977).** Fr. Jerome D'Souza. Priest, Educationist and Statesman. By V. Lawrence SUNDARAM S.J. Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1986. Pp. xxiii-382. Rs 45.00 \$ 9.50 (pb), Rs 48.00 \$ 11.00 (hb).

All those who have known and dealt with Fr Jerome will agree that he was a towering personality. Yet he was deeply simple and straight-forward. All through his long life and with so many varied responsibilities he remained astonishingly equanimous. Whether in the corridors of the U.N. headquarters in New York, or the chambers of the parliament in New Delhi, whether in his office as principal of Loyola College, Madras, or in his simple room-cum-office at the Jesuit general curia in Rome as the first ever Indian assistant to the General, Fr Jerome always kept a deep, nearly constant awareness of what the life he had willingly chosen under God's grace was meant for.

Indeed this aspect of his life is perhaps the best contribution Fr Sundaram makes to the Jesuit history in India. From the spiritual diaries of Fr Jerome kept so faithfully until his death the biographer could cull all those passages that throw light on his inner life. That he was a great educationist, loved by generations of students of all faiths and classes, that he contributed remarkably to the progress of India as a nation in the Constituent Assembly and at the U.N. Sessions, that he helped the Society of Jesus to move forward, as an Assistant for Asia, all this is perfectly true. Yet it is his constant quest for self-purification, for detachment, for better surrender to Jesus that give us a more authentic picture of him.

In his first years as a Jesuit he suffered from depression, from lack of trust in God and from too much confidence in himself. But Fr Jerome made use of the discernment of spirits in a wonderful manner, and this was kept up till his last sickness in 1977. He knew also how to do the examination of conscience, so as to check the purity of his motives in

doing this or that. He was possessed of a natural instinct for self-analysis without indulging in any narcissism.

Fr Jerome could not have a better biographer than Fr Sundaram who knew him personally for so many years. The book is filled with quotations from all sorts of writings, mostly from Fr Jerome's pen, i.e., letters, diaries, speeches, articles, books, etc. Fr Jerome never had time to become a writer of note, although he will be remembered for the book he wrote as a rejoinder to Sardar Panikkar's *Asia and Western Dominance*. Though he wanted to write an autobiography, Fr Jerome had to leave the biographical task to somebody else. Fr Sundaram has shouldered it with commendable success.

Jerome D'Souza belonged to the Mangalorean Catholic community. F owed enormously to his family background, above all to his mother Serafina whose five children dedicated themselves to the Lord, four as priests and one as religious of the Apostolic Carmel. Among the four priests three were Jesuits. A deep faith, a devotion to Christ and his Blessed Mother, a constant insistence on his ideals, all this Fr Jerome received abundantly from his own family and Christian community.

E.R. HAMBYE, S J

**I Sought and I Found. My Experience of God and of the Church.** By CARLO CARRETTO, London, DLT 1984, Pp. vi-15. £ 2.95.

Carlo Carretto is a renowned spiritual writer of our times. The present work, *I Sought and I Found*, will give the readers an idea of the rich resource from which the author has already shared profound spiritual insights in his earlier writings like *In Search of the Beyond*, *Summoned by Love*, etc. (cf VIDYAYOTI 1973, 375; 1975, 310; 1977, 37; 1979, 286 and 540; 1986, 452). In the book Carretto makes a biographic sketch of his spiritual journey which begins in his childhood in Northern Italy, winds through his adolescence and the hectic years as President of Catholic

Action, and culminates in his option for radical poverty and commitment to the life of a Little Brother of Jesus. The book is divided into two parts: Experience of God and Experience of the Church. Readers will undoubtedly get an inkling of the passionate character that is Carlo Carretto.

J. MATHIAS, S.J.

**My Soul Looks Back.** By James H. CONE. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books 1986, Pp. 144. \$ 8.95.

*My Soul Looks Back* is an autobiographical account of the author's life as a theologian and a freedom fighter for black liberation. The Black Theology he represents is based on justice and the civil rights movement. His theological speculations evolve from the context of exploitation and oppression. This is one of the reasons why Third World theologians are able to identify with his insights and aspirations.

The first chapter mainly deals with his theological formation. The remaining four chapters deal with the interaction between Black Theology, Black Power and the Black Church and also the need for dialogue with Third World theologians, black feminist theologians and Marxists.

Throughout the book the author pours out his anguish and aspirations, his disappointments and successes which touch the heart of the reader. The clarity of his thoughts and his simple style of presentation enable even a layman to understand his theology.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

### Theology for Today

**The Human and the Holy. Asian Perspectives in Christian Theology.** Edited by Emerito P. NACPIL and Douglas J. ELWOOD. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books 1980. Pp. x-367. \$ 14.95.

From "Theology in Asia", the time has come to develop an "Asian Theology", that is a theology related to the specific socio-cultural and religious context of the Asian countries. The All-Asia Consultation on Theological Education for Christian Ministry held in Manila, March 1977, the proceedings of which are recorded in this volume, wrestled with the Asian historical reality on the one hand and, on the other, with

the living reality of God in Christ witnessed to by the Scriptures. In order to discern what sort of theological issues are in fact being studied in the Asian situation, the dimensions of man's relation to the Holy, to society and to history are taken as the focus of intense analysis and discussion. The Consultation was specially concerned with the implications of an Asian theological agenda for Christian ministry and theological education. The background papers, presentations and workshop reports provide a wealth of stimulating material for further study and reflection.

The contributors recognize the merit of theology as it has been developed in the West in the past, but point to the need of fresh reflection on the Word in so far as the world view of Asian cultures, their religious and philosophical patterns of thought, and the social structures are radically different. Since the world-view of the Bible and that of Asia are more closely related, some of the historico-cultural problems of Europeans in interpreting the Bible are less relevant in Asia.

As we cannot do justice to all the individual contributions, suffice it to single out that of D.J. Elwood on the "Emerging Themes in Asian Theological Thinking" (ch. 12). The author presents in a succinct and clear way the findings of many pioneers like M.M. Thomas (the need for a living theology), E. Nacpil (man's liberation from the shackles of time, call to responsibility in mastery and sharing the earth, man's vision of the future as the horizon of Hope), R. Panikkar (hidden Christ of Hinduism), J.Y. Lee (the Yin-Yang way of thinking), C.S. Song and Preman Niles (Creation as theological framework) and K. Kitamori (love rooted in the pain of God).

In going through this volume, some questions arise. How far is Asia a sufficiently compact region, even allowing for sub-regions calling for sub-forms of theology? Why is there scarcely any reference to Islam? Why not include Israel and Hebrew thought as Asian realities? All the findings reported here somehow point to the directions which theological education should take. However, why is there no attempt to consciously draw some conclusions? The paper on "Theological Education Today" has many valuable insights. But it is a summary and a reflection on a International Consultation held in Switzerland in 1975! One may notice a lac

of urgency regarding the need for liberation in Asia today. This may be due to the fact that the matter was not so prominent in theological reflection at the time of the consultation. Still, there is enough food for thought in the volume.

George Lobo, S.J.

**Theological Investigations.** By Karl RAHNER. Vol. XVIII: *God and Revelation*. Vol. XIX: *Faith and Ministry*. London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984. Pp. vi-282 and vi-304. £ 18.50 each.

Volumes 18 and 19 of *Theological Investigations* were published after Volume 20, reviewed in VIDYAJYOTI 1983, p. 153. These three last volumes together contain all the chapters of volumes 13 and 14 of the original German collection, *Schriften zur Theologie*. The blurb of Vol. 20 informs the public that these last volumes "complete the tally of twenty volumes in the English language edition of *Theological Investigations*, being the translation of all Rahner's volumes of *Schriften*." It appears therefore that these volumes close the English collection. The claim made is, however, not quite correct. The 20 English volumes give us the material of only the first 14 out of the 16 volumes of the German collection (volumes 15 and 16 of this collection were reviewed in VIDYAJYOTI 1985, pp. 532-34). Apart from this fact, and maybe some occasional minor shortening of articles, five full essays were dropped from volume 6 of the *Schriften*. Their titles could be translated thus: The Changing Church; Conciliar Teaching about the Church and the Future Reality of Christian Life; The Limits of the Hierarchical Church; The Claim of God and the Individual; "Situation Ethics" from an Ecumenical Perspective.

Even as it is, the value and the extension of the theological insights contained in the 331 essays of this English collection, covering an astonishing theological activity of more than 40 years, cannot be overestimated. The *Investigations* represent a sustained effort for an overall and consistent revision of the whole of theology, always keeping in mind the pastoral dimension. If it is true that the ideas repeat themselves in the various essays, this only shows that the insights found in the various areas of theology derive from a consistent thought struc-

ture that somehow or other puts all details into a particular and often quite revelatory perspective.

Scholars will have to refer, of course, to the German original of the texts, besides the English version. As the volumes do not always coincide, the following table may help cross references:

German S.z.T.	English T.I.
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6 (exc. 5 essays)
7	7 & 8
8	9 & 10
9	11 & 12
10	13 & 14
11	15
12	16 & 17
13	18 & 19
14	19 & 20
15	—
16	—

Incidentally, volume 15 of the English edition, totally devoted to the history of the sacrament of penance, has a very unsatisfactory table of contents. But the volume seems to be a complete translation.

Rahner always provokes thought and leads us to further questions. In the two volumes that we present here, for instance, there is an essay on Purgatory which the author compares to the reincarnation beliefs of so many millions of people. He even seems to suggest the possible acceptability in Catholic dogma of a "modified" form of reincarnation anthropology, a position I find difficult to accept. There is also an interesting essay on "On the Importance of Non-Christian Religions for Salvation" where their function in what we might term the "history of grace" is investigated. Priests will be interested in the essays "Theology and Spirituality of Pastoral Work in the Parish"; "The Spirituality of the Secular Priest"; "The Spirituality of the Priest in the Light of his Office"; and "On the Theology of Worship". There is a philosophical essays on "Eternity from Time" and others "On Angels"; "Mary and the Christian Image of Women" and "Mary's Virginity". Other essays approach the frequent Rahnerian themes of Christology,

the question of God and man's dialogue with Him, and the various problems involved in the theological task.

For more than a quarter of a century VIDYAJYOTI has been reviewing these two important collections and had consistently praised their high standards of theological content and production, even if the language and thought of Rahner are not always easy. With Fr P De Letter, writing in July 1961, we commend again not only the whole collection but also the valuable introduction to the first volume by C. Ernst, the first translator, "a real help to the English readers to enter into the world of thought that is Rahner's," thus "preparing them for the effort demanded for a fruitful understanding of these investigations" (p. 236). There are today, of course, other introductions to the thought of Rahner (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, Nov. 1984, pp. 534-5) but the essay of Ernst is still valuable. At any rate the value of this collection is not so much that Rahner gives us a ready-made theology, "his" theology (which is always rooted in tradition), but that we consistently see in these pages a modern Christian mind struggling honestly and with courage with the problems involved in being a thinking Christian today.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Marxist Analysis and Christian Faith.** By René Coste. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books 1985. Pp. viii-232. \$ 11.95.

This is a timely work since the relationship of Christian Liberation Theology with Marxism is now being hotly discussed. Author of more than 15 books on Christian social thought, Coste seems to be among the most competent to handle the subject. He does not hesitate to admit what is positive in Marxist thought, nor is he slow in denouncing what is negative. When the book was first published in French in 1974, Latin American Liberation Theology was still in its infancy. Already then, Coste, an European thinker, was able to appreciate its potential. Given his openness, one could expect him to evaluate it even more positively if he were to write today.

In the very first chapter, the author makes a helpful distinction between the various strata in Marxist analysis, the

scientific, the political, the ethical and the philosophical. This enables him to transcend the frequent equation: Marxist thought=dialectical materialism. By recognizing the limitations of Christianity as Marx viewed it during his time, which in some ways seemed to be a caricature of the message of Christ, the author is able to accept the critique of Marx calmly.

From his own faith commitment, Coste sees three phases in the confrontation between Marx and Christianity: (1) Marx questions and challenges the faith; (2) in its turn faith critiques Marx; (3) we must then reformulate the faith for our time. Thereby, Marxism, instead of being a curse or a siren song, becomes a challenge to Christianity to recover its own genuine character. A spurious Christianity may indeed be rightly accused of being the "opium of the people." But genuine Christianity will in fact be "dynamite," bringing the dynamism of faith, hope and love.

So, ultimately, the Marxist challenge should lead to the rediscovery of the revolutionary character of Christianity. For this we have to go beyond political analysis to a theological analysis in the light of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This would judge all merely human 'isms' and ideologies, be it those of Marxism or of Liberal Capitalism. If Marx challenges Christians regarding the ineffectiveness of their faith to bring about justice, it would not be sufficient to feel hurt because a sore point has been touched. Christians must strive to bring about God's revolution by realizing the "community of the resurrection."

The author seems to see an irreducible opposition between the class struggle of Marxism and the call to community of Christianity. Today he should be better able to see that the class struggle is a fact of life, initiated not by the proletariat, but by the vested interests. Marx himself envisaged the utopia of a classless society. So even on this level, a dialogue seems to be possible.

This work, as a *critical discernment* of the phenomenon of Marxism, is a must for those who wish to reflect deeply on the role of the Church regarding justice and liberation.

George Lobo, S.J.



**Basic Catholic Beliefs for Today. The Creed Explained.** By Rev. Leonard F. BADIA. *New York: Alba House 1984. Pp. vi-170. \$ 7.95.*

The author's intention is to explain basic Catholic beliefs as expressed in the various Church dogmas to contemporary Christians. After a brief history of Catholic dogma, he traces the scriptural basis and the official teaching of the Church regarding the articles of faith which are grouped under nine headings. He then relates the dogma to the concerns of today's believers by discussing some special questions which have troubled Christians throughout the centuries such as why there is evil in the world, how non-Christians are saved, etc. He also gives a set of questions at the end of each chapter for further reflections. The dogmas are dealt with systematically, and with clarity. The book is a valuable tool for those who teach adult-catechism.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

**The Eucharist—The Paschal Mystery and the New Covenant.** By Caetano DA CRUZ FERNANDES. *Bangalore, Theological Publications in India. 1985. Pp. xii-199.*

The author's aim in writing this book which is the result of his doctoral research is to have a better understanding of the Eucharist, the most precious gift of Jesus. He does this by systematically presenting the biblical teaching on this mystery.

He starts with the Second Vatican Council's teaching on the Eucharist as the celebration of the paschal mystery.

Unlike the official documents prior to Vatican II in which the Mass is envisioned as the re-enactment of Christ's death on the cross, the Council's document brings in the new dimension of the redemptive value of the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. This has a profound impact on the doctrine of Redemption, the Church, and the Sacraments. However, the Council does not explain why the eucharistic sacrifice of the Body and Blood, while perpetuating the sacrifice of the cross, should in consequence be a memorial of Jesus' Death and Resurrection. The author's whole preoccupation is to show the relationship between the Blood of Christ as the New Covenant. He does this systematically by

starting from the biblical teachings on the Eucharist as the re-enactment of the Paschal mystery, the presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, the Eucharist as the New Covenant, the biblical understanding of the New Covenant and finally Jesus' Blood as New Covenant. He substantiates his thesis from the ancient liturgical traditions.

The book is a valuable addition to the theology of the Eucharist. It is meant for the biblical scholars and the theologians.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

### Moral and Canonical Questions

**Marriage and Divorce.** By Theodore MACKIN, S.J. *New York, Paulist Press, 1984. Pp. ix-565. \$ 19.95.*

There has been a spate of literature on this crucial theme during the last few decades. The present massive work is easily the most thorough and deeply researched. It resumes most of what has been said on the subject in recent years.

The author sets out to examine the claims of Catholic Church authority that the sacramental consummated marriage is absolutely indissoluble and that this doctrine interprets Christ's mind regarding the issue. He is persuaded that the claims are not well founded as they are supported by two dubious strategies: first, to write into the definition of marriage that it is a non-voidable contract and then use the definition to block any possibility of dissolution; second, to seek in the New Testament the warrant for a later, twelfth-century position. He further tries to show that the tradition in the matter of divorce has neither been simple nor uniform. The variety of ways in which the Church has faced the issue in the past points to the way of handling it in the future.

In Jesus' generation two schools of rabbis debated the meaning of *ervat dabar* (uncleanness of a thing) in Deut 24:1 that justified divorce. The author examines the the Synoptic passages on divorce, especially those in Mt 5 and 19 which have the exceptive clause, "unless in the case of *porneia*." Then he investigates the matter in the Pauline tradition. Although he finds much that is unclear, he thinks that Matthew and Paul felt free to adapt the teaching of

Jesus to the situation of their particular communities.

The long treatment of marriage and divorce in tradition, which comprises the greater part of the book, brings out the great complexity of the matter. The teachings of the Fathers, the writings of theologians and canonists, and the pronouncements of the magisterium are all placed in their context. This is particularly noteworthy in the case of the anathema of Trent. Mainly due to the intervention of the Venetian ambassador, it was softened to condemn only those who questioned the right of the Church to pronounce on the subject, and not those who, like the Greeks, defended the dissolubility of marriage because of adultery.

The study of Catholic teaching in this century brings out the difference between the absolutist and juridical perspective of the first decades and the more personalist and dynamic attitude, since Doms and others, that was largely adopted by Vatican II. The author finds the canons of the New Code not altogether consistent in as much as they accept the conception of Vatican II on marriage, but at the same time maintain the traditional position regarding divorce. He sees no reason to think that the Church's law cannot further evolve to meet the situation of modern times. Here he draws attention to the progressive extension of the papal power to dissolve marriage that are not sacramental and consummated. So he thinks that there is no compelling reason to stop at this barrier and deny the right of remarriage to those who are trapped in a seemingly impossible position.

Perhaps the author has not sufficiently appreciated the importance of the sacramentality of Christian marriage. Here and there, he tends to bend the evidence to his position. Still, this work will be widely accepted as an authoritative text on the subject.

George Lobo, S.J.

**A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law.** By Thomas PAZHAYAMPALLIL, S.D.B. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti College Publications, 1985. Pp. xxxii-685. Np.

This is a handy commentary on the whole of the New Code, excepting the law on the Sacraments. The omission of this section, including Marriage, is perhaps due to the desire to limit the length

of an already extensive work. The author has taken great pains in preparing the work. At times he has reordered the material so that the obligations of various groups of persons in the Church come out clearer. A glossary and Index make consultation easier. References to the official *Communicationes* published by the Code Commission might have clarified some issues better.

The author has given a good explanation of the nature and purpose of law in the Church. The foundation of the new Code in the theology of Vatican II is brought out in the Introduction. The law is meant to be an expression of charity and defence of freedom in the Church. It is the spirit, and not the letter, that is paramount. Canon Law is to be at the service of the Mystical Body.

However, these perspectives do not come out clearly in the actual detailed commentary which appears far too juridical. The authors and works cited are far from representative. Some, like Ottaviani, could have well been left out. Others like Oray have been mentioned, but not in their latest works. In general, the references are not sufficiently up to date.

A more important defect is the summary treatment of vital institutions like parish councils (even taking into account the material in the Appendix). The discussion on matters such as whether there is one or two subjects of supreme power in the Church could have been left to Ecclesiology. Some readers may find it interesting to know what would happen if the Pope became insane or a notorious heretic (226), although this is said to have never happened so far!

One would have wished that the author had discussed how to adapt the laws to mission countries like India. In this and in other respects, the commentary manifests a too literal interpretation. In spite of these shortcomings, the commentary could be useful as a source for ready reference.

George Lobo, S.J.

### Mission Today

**Mission of an Emerging World Church.** By Jacob Kavunkal S.V.D. (ed.). Indore, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra 1986, Pp. 111, Rs. 18.00.

This book is the seminar proceedings of the Missiology Department of the

Yarra Theological Union, held at Melbourne, Australia. The purpose of this seminar was to carry ahead the good work started by the Second Vatican Council and the Papal encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* to help the Church fulfil faithfully her mission in our times.

David Penman considers that (1) An Emphasis on God's Nature, (2) An Eternal Purpose for the Nations, (3) An Extraordinary Intervention in History, and (4) An Enfleshment into His Likeness (dimension of discipleship) are some of the crucial dimensions in mission theology.

Rodger Bassham presents the mission of an emerging World Church as that of a witness to what we see and discern God is doing in the world today. He touches various dimensions of the activities of the Church such as ecumenism, development programmes, basic ecclesial communities, etc. He sees the task ahead as the proclamation of the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole Church.

Anthony Kelly deals with some aspects of liberation theology. Responding to this paper, Christopher Dureau points out some draw-backs, the main one being that the paper did not cover the current biblical reflections which provide a background for the Church's preferential option for the poor.

Jacob Kavunkal sees the mission of the Church in the context of the dialogue with the other religions. He emphasizes the uniqueness of the love and service revealed in the historical Jesus and his work for the realization of the Kingdom. A life of dialogue with other religious peoples enables us to realise we are members of the one human family. Responding to Kavunkal's paper Ennio Mantovani gives several paradigms for the encounter between Christianity and other religions.

The book ends with a panel discussion on "Mission of the Australian Church within the Emerging World Church." This would be of special interest to those involved in missionary activities in Australia. The book gives many valuable insights about mission theology in the contemporary world.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

**Creative Ministries and Affirmative Action in Today's India.** Edited by Ailwyn D'SILVA, Pune, National Vocation Service Centre 1984. Pp. iii-214. Rs 15.

This book records the work of the Seminar at the NVSC in 1984 on creative ministries. A theological setting was created by Kurien Kunnumpuram's lecture "Towards a Theology of Ministries" in which he surveys the history of ministry from the primitive church until Vatican II and today, and also reflects upon ministry. This is followed by papers which describe and reflect upon new and diverse forms of ministry by priests and religious and creative ministries in parishes. Samples of ministry among women, youth and workers are presented. Ministry in a multi-religious community (Huntermang) with Muslims, through the media and catechetics; by Basic Communities and in an Ashram are described. These papers are written from and describe personal experience. The book opens up to the reader the challenging diversity of Christian service today and is informative. The final statement of the seminar is included as well as a reflection on seminary training in the context of mission in India. We regret the late review notice given to this book which will be of formative value to priests, religious and lay Christians.

P.M.M.

**The Theology of the Fisherman.** By Fr Jose PUTHENVEED. Quilon, Department of Psychology 1985. Pp. viii-170. Rs 25.

In this book Fr Jose brings forth a theology of the fisherman through a search into the various dimensions of the fishermen's struggle in Kerala, in the light of the inspired Word of God and the teachings of the Church.

In the first part the author presents a concise account of the problems of the fishermen, and their struggles to overcome them through Union Movements, their agitations, etc.

In the second part, where he tries to theologise on the present situation, one may find some drawbacks. First he strongly opposes the direct involvement of priests and religious in politics. He gives few arguments to substantiate his statement. For example, "Jesus Christ came into this world as the liberator but it was not a material liberation that he envisaged. His main goal was to liberate man from sin, and consequently from eternal punishment." (86) The author suffers from the same old problem in Christian spirituality of a dichotomy between spirit and matter.

Secondly, the author opposes any form of violence to bring liberation to the people. He recommends non-violence by presenting Jesus as a non-violent person. He points out that Jesus' death was the result of a plot, arrest and condemnation by Jews and Pilate (107), forgetting that his violent death was the culmination of his opposition to the ruling classes of his time.

Finally, after a brief analysis of Marxism, Capitalism and the Kingdom of God as visualised by Christ, the author concludes that the task of the Church is to invite and encourage all political parties to seek enlightenment and wisdom from the Gospel of Christ (131), but he does not give any concrete suggestions to achieve this end.

In spite of these drawbacks, the author has to be thanked for his valuable insights regarding the Gandhian perspectives of liberation, and the socio-economic challenges of the fishermen.

F. FRANCIS, S.J.

**An African Journey. A Portrait of Africa, of Hunger, and of Hope.** By Mark PATINKIN. *Grand Rapids, W.B. Eerdmans*, 1985. Pp. 48 (8½ × 11) \$ 4.95.

The material—articles and photos—in this book originally appeared in the *Providence Journal Bulletin* (Rhode Island USA). This is a first-hand account of the famine which struck and destroyed so deeply the lives and land of Ethiopia, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Mali and other North African countries. Mark Patinkin travelled in these countries from the 9th until 29th Dec. 1984. As a journalist he takes us into the lives of the starved people, the refugees, the people beginning to experience famine and the volunteers who have responded to the situation or been in those areas in medical or development services for two to five years. His daily despatches, which appeared in the newspaper, make us aware of many aspects of this great human tragedy and the indomitable character and simple depths of the human person as well as the responses of the human community to those in need. This short book forces the reader to reflect. The proceeds from the sale are to be donated to Famine Relief.

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

**Truth and Social Reform.** By Vishal MANGALWADI. *New Delhi, Nivedit Good Book* 1986. Pp. viii-102. Rs 28.

This is an impassioned appeal for justice to rural farmers, especially in the form of remunerative prices. The author combines evangelical zeal with deep concern for social reform. His reflections spring from a lived experience in a village in a backward area of Madhya Pradesh and a profound reflection on the Word of God. His scriptural interpretations at times may be more of an accommodating kind and his social analysis may be too conditioned by the particular experience he had. But a reading of this slim volume cannot but urge one to a greater concern for the poor.

The author seems to have an allergy for any form of planned economy. He does not hesitate to make statements such as, "The average urban Indian has almost as much wealth as his Western counterpart" (p. 60). He is against State interventions like fixing "remunerative prices." He thinks that justice can be achieved by some form of cooperative projects like warehousing, giving credit to farmers and marketing grains. How this could be realized on a vast scale, he does not say. But the proposals are well meant and show the direction in which something can be done for the rural poor.

George LOBO, S.J.

## Spirituality

**A Companion to the Alternative Service Book.** By R.C.D. JASPER and Paul F. BRADSHAW. *London, SPCK*, 1986. Pp. x-500. £ 19.50.

The movement of liturgical renewal, development and reform came to a climax in the Catholic Church in Vatican II and the subsequent new lectionary and liturgical texts. Within the Church of England a similar movement was crowned by the *Alternative Service Book* (ASB 1980) which may be used along with the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) in the liturgical life of the Anglican Church. The ASB is a book of authorized Services.

This volume is a companion written by the chairman of the liturgical commission and a leading liturgical scholar in which they have "examined the place

and function of the ASB in the life and worship of the Church of England, particularly in relation to earlier prayer books" (Press Release).

At the beginning the authors have given an historical introduction to Services and Service-books up to the ASB. This is followed by a study of the content of the ASB. The normal format for each part is an informative and concise historical introduction which surveys the life of the Christian community from the primitive Church until today, and a detailed commentary on the text of the particular Service or section of a Service. Common forms which recur are studied together (The Lord's Prayer, Gloria Patri, This is the Word of the Lord, the Litany and Invocations). Long and rich chapters study the Morning and Evening Prayer and the Eucharist. Then shorter adequate studies are made of the Collects, the Lectionary, Initiation Services, the Marriage Service, Funeral Service, the Ordinal, the Liturgical Psalter and the Calendar.

Each chapter and sections within a chapter have adequate bibliographies which include writings on liturgy from all the major churches. The value of the book for pastors, seminarians and lay people of the Anglican tradition is obvious. However, there is such an abundance of historical information and commentary on liturgical texts which are in many ways shared by other Christian churches that all priests, students for priesthood and educated lay people will truly be formed by this volume.

The authors have not commented on the Liturgical Psalter, nor entered upon the minefield of liturgical language and imagery, nor made a comparative study, interesting and valuable as it would be, of the ASB and other similar results of the international liturgical movement.

The book includes an Index of Readings and Psalms in the ASB and a very useful general Index. Anyone doing a course on liturgy will not regret the time spent with this book, which also provides initial help for a study of the sacraments with its historical surveys and indications of other authoritative writings,

P.M. MEAGHER, S.J.

*In Search of Peace.* Edited by Dom Dr SA. Bombay, Daughters of St Paul, 1986. Pp. 36, Rs. 6. (Available at 143, Waterfield Road, Bombay 400036).

This booklet commemorates the International Year of Peace with 10 short reflections on the topic. It brings out the idea that peace is not a commodity that can be bought in the market, but "a state of being" to which we all aspire. Peace is not "a nostalgic yearning for the unattainable" (reflection 9) but the tranquility of order, an equilibrium, so to say, that is destroyed by disorder (sin). The booklet mentions some of the reasons for this disorder, selfishness, hatred and revenge—which create unjust situations. In the final analysis, it is lack of love and concern for our fellow human beings by which our mental and creative energies are diverted from purposeful activities and channelled towards destructive goals (reflection 2). Personally, I dislike the condemnation of any one community by name, even if what is said is true: it is a disservice to the cause of Peace. Each person is called to a commitment towards building a just society by being involved in the concerns of his/her country, and thus working for peace founded on truth and justice.

Bro. Conrad FONSECA, S.J.

*Parable of Community.* By Bro. ROGER of Taizé. Bangalore, ATC, 1986. Pp. 96. Rs. 15.

In recent years the Taizé community and Bro. Roger in particular have become known to many in India. This booklet contains four short texts about the vision underlying the life of the community. The first contains the rule of Taizé and the others are letters of Bro. Roger. The Rule contains guidelines for common living and for a life of prayer. Contemplation must lead to action and activity back to contemplate one's calling. Each member is to be in touch with himself giving value to the inner silence and harmony. He is expected to cultivate joy, mercy and simplicity besides observing celibacy, poverty and obedience. The end product should be unity in community.

In the three letters that follow Bro. Roger speaks of the presence of Christ in each one and of His unending love, so that we are encouraged to "become what you are" (p. 71), in spite of our weaknesses, in which we experience God's forgiveness. We are not alone in the struggle.

Bro. Conrad FONSECA, S.J.

(See also p. 547)

# Vidyajyoti

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### In This Issue

The laity dominate our concerns as we close this year's volume of VIDYAJYOTI. Fr. Wilfred FELIX concludes his study of the issues facing the laity in Asia, where the main problem is not secularism but poverty, and shows the important role which in this context the laity play in the local churches of the continent.

Addressing the National Advisory Council Fr Parmananda DIVARKAR makes a reflection on the Extraordinary Synod one year after the event, and shows that its message, like that of Vatican II, does not so much consist in new doctrines but in the demand of a deep change of attitudes in the whole Church, a real conversion.

Out of a close contact with the Muslim world, Fr C.W. TROLL shows us the challenges it throws for an Indian Christian Theology today, challenges that theologians and the Church at large can ill afford to ignore.

Finally, Fr F. PAMPFER makes a reflection on some of the issues which the New Catechism must include if it has to meet the pastoral needs of today.

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*In this season when the Eternal Wisdom becomes Light among the poor, Vidyajyoti wishes all its readers God's resplendent Grace and His Blessings for the New Year.*

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# Three Nodal Points in the Theology of the Laity Today

Fr. Felix WILFRED

## PART II

### Difference of Worlds—A World of Difference

#### *Secularism at Asia's Door?*

Those who are familiar with the discussions on Schema XIII and the evolution of thought at the Council will know why *Gaudium et Spes* marked a very significant achievement.<sup>34</sup> It is in the perspective of the new vision of the Council on the world that the role of the laity is to be understood.

In the last few years, however, serious apprehensions have been expressed in some Church circles to the effect that the autonomy of the world recognized by Vatican II, and the process of secularization in the West have led to the extolling of a dangerous secularism. Concern is voiced about a world turning atheist in practice, by the constant proclamation of the freedom of man in every sector of life, without reference to God, a world which therefore flouts moral and religious values. The optimistic realism of the Council in relation to the world gives way to a grim and pessimistic attitude. This assessment and attitude widen the gap between the Church and the world and lead the Church once again to assure the one-sided role of one who directs and teaches. Learning from the world and reading the signs of the times are considered dangerous because they can drag the Church into secularism and worldly ways.

A real danger for the church in Asia is that such a dismal picture of the situation in the West may be generalised and projected on the Asian scene with serious repercussion on the mission and involvement of the Asian laity. In our understanding of the relationship of the Church and laity to the world, we could easily be led to adopt the

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<sup>34</sup>. For the history of the document cf. C. MORLLER, in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican-II*, Vol. V, ed. by H. VORGRIMMER, London, Burns & Oates, 1969, pp. 77 ff.

Western model, which is focussed on the question of secularization, and to share the fears of secularism. I do not say that the problem of secularization is absent here or that Asia is immune to it. But overstressing it has the effect of diverting the attention from the more pressing issues of the Asian world.

### *A World Seen Through the Eyes of the Poor*

When we speak of the mission of the laity in the world, it is important to specify which world we mean. For, there are today great differences in the experiences of Churches concerning the world. Undoubtedly, Vatican II, in its Pastoral Constitution, gave the whole Church a new spirit and approach in relating to the world. However, the image and understanding of the world it had at that time and its concerns were very much conditioned by its experience and history in the West. It was a world which, after centuries of conflict, had become independent from the control of Christendom and thereby secularized. Owen Chadwick speaks of "The Secularization of the European Mind".<sup>35</sup> After this long period of estrangement from each other<sup>36</sup> during which both the Church and the world followed independent and conflictual ways and goals, Vatican II felt an urgent need of relating to the world in a new spirit. This meant, in the first place, a recognition of the autonomy of the world.

But the world in which the church of Asia and its laity are called to fulfil their mission is markedly different from the secular world characteristic of the West and its history. This world of Asia, as well as of Latin America and Africa, is a world of poverty and starvation, a world of exploitation, injustice and authoritarianism. The world of Asia to which the Asian local churches and their laity are called to respond can be best understood only if it is *seen through the eyes of the millions of the poor*. It is the world of Hasari Pal, a rikshaw-puller of Calcutta through whose eyes and experience of a struggle for life Dominique Lapierre tries to see Calcutta in his recent book *The City of Joy*.<sup>37</sup> This is the world of suffering and anguish from which the laity may distance themselves only at the

35. O. CHADWICK, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1975 (reprints 1977, 1979). The author dedicates one entire chapter to anticlericalism.

36. Cf. J.S. SCHAPIRO, *Anticlericalism: Conflict between Church and State in France, Italy and Spain*, Princeton 1967; G. WEILL, *Historie de l'idée laïque au déclin du moyen âge*, 5 vols., Louvain 1956-1963.

37. D. LAPIERRE, *The City of Joy*, London, Arrow Books, 1986.



price of renegating the Christian faith and the hope they are called upon to live.

### *With Hope to New Horizons*

Relating to this world and its condition evidently requires, on the part of the Asian churches and their laity, the adoption of a different approach and new emphasis. In the world of secularization where the temporal realities have their own consistency and are governed by their own inner laws, the role of the laity can easily be understood as a vocation to collaborate with the creation of God and lead the earthly realities to Him. In this context, the relation of the laity can, therefore, be defined as *consecratio mundi*.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, the distressing situation of poverty, bondage, injustice and oppression demand that the role of the laity in the Asian world be understood in terms of *hope*.

Hope is, in a way, the negation of all the present limitations and a movement towards new possibilities, new horizons of being and becoming. It is characteristic of Christian hope that it calls for a transformation of the present under the vision of a "new heaven and a new earth." It is this Christian hope the laity are required to bring to bear upon the Asian political, economic and social scene.

The strong messianic and future-oriented vision of Christianity distinguishes it from other Asian religions which have their own points of emphasis. In its relationship with Asia, Christianity highlighted in the past the dimensions of Christian love (hence the establishment of several charitable institutions by which Christianity is known by the ordinary man in Asia) and the ethical and moral teachings. It has been forgotten that eschatology and hope are something specifically Christian. At this turning point of the history of Christianity in Asia, the presence of the Church and its involvement should be characterized by hope, and it is by this fundamental Christian reality that the layman in Asia should be defined. The Christian laity in Asia are to be understood not so simply as those who consecrate the world (*consecratio mundi*), not as those who preach morals, but more specifically and, above all, as those who bring the message of Christian hope into Asia by their involvement in transforming the present realities of poverty and oppression.

38. Cf. M.D. CHENU, "Les Laïcs et la 'consecratio mundi'" in *L'Eglise de Vatican II*, Vol. III (Unam Sanctam 51c), Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1966, pp. 1033-1053 (with further bibliography).

*Searching God's Kingdom in the World*

It is from within this Asian situation that we have to pose the question of the relationship of the Kingdom of God to the world. The Kingdom of God and its arrival must cease to be abstract and remote and become vital questions impinging upon our experiences in Asia. Though Vatican II had the secularized and independent world as its immediate concern, yet the method it provided and its fundamental intuitions regarding the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the world are a great help to understand the role of the laity in Asia today. Many problems and conflicts arise in the Christian communities for lack of clarity on this question.

Any serious theology of the mission of the laity in the Asian world should be solidly based on three fundamental truths:

(i) The Kingdom of God is broader than the Church with which it cannot be identified. In fact, the Church is called "the initial budding forth of the Kingdom!"<sup>39</sup>

(ii) The Kingdom of God is not something to be realised *solely* by the Church; it is taking shape in the world through its history, its progress, evolution and struggles.<sup>40</sup> This is so because God's grace and his Spirit are active in the world: "God's Spirit, who with a marvellous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is not absent from this development."<sup>41</sup> That is why the world is to be looked at not as a passive field into which the Church should bring its religious dimension, but a field where God is already active: "Christians are convinced that the achievements of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the flowering of his mysterious design."<sup>42</sup>

(iii) There is but one plan of salvation willed by God for the whole of human community:<sup>43</sup> "All this holds good not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly. For since Christ died for all, and since all people are, in fact, called to one and the same destiny which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit in a way known to God, offers to all the possibility of being associated with the paschal mystery."<sup>44</sup> The poverty and suffering the poor of Asia undergo in their daily lives,

39. *Lumen Gentium* 5.

40. *Gaudium et Spes* 39.

41. *Gaudium et Spes* 26.

42. *Gaudium et Spes* 34.

43. *Nostra Aetate* 1.

44. *Gaudium et Spes* 22.

and their longing for a life full of light and free from injustice and oppression, are realities not unconnected to the paschal mystery.

The laity are called to "search God's Kingdom in the world"<sup>45</sup> in the midst of its history, developments, anguishes and struggles. For, "here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age."<sup>46</sup> It is to be noted that the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, speaking of the laity, did not limit itself to say that the laity are to engage themselves in temporal affairs, but affirms that their vocation is to search for God's Kingdom in the world. A careful study of the history of the Constitution will show how in the pre-conciliar text as well as in the first three amended schemata the expression "search for God's Kingdom" did not figure. The vocation of the laity was simply limited "to set in order temporal things by the whole of their lives in their own, albeit not exclusive, way."<sup>47</sup> This acquired more specific and Christian character when the dimension of Kingdom was introduced. Precisely because the laity ought to relate themselves to the world by searching God's Kingdom there, *Gaudium et Spes* came out with one of the strongest statements of the Council: "A Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties towards his neighbour and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation."<sup>48</sup>

### *Refusing to Conform*

What we have said of the Asian context in terms of Christian hope and the Kingdom of God, highlights also the *critical role* demanded of the Christian laity vis-à-vis the present Asian situation. This means that the laity cannot any more interpret their vocation simply as fulfilling their profession in the world with a Christian spirit. The challenges today are great and much more is demanded of the laity. Bringing the message of hope to the Asian world would lead the laity in their concrete day-to-day life to a critical questioning of political structures of authoritarianism at micro and macro levels and of the unjust economic and social systems.<sup>49</sup> They are called by God

45. *Lumen Gentium* 31.

46. *Gaudium et Spes* 39.

47. Cf. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, "The Typological Definition of the Christian Layman according to Vatican II," in his work *The Mission of the Church*, London, Sheed & Ward, 1971, pp. 90-116; ID., "A New Type of Layman," *ibid.* pp. 117-131.

48. *Gaudium et Spes* 43.

49. Cf. P. DIGAN, *Churches in Contestation: Asian Christian Social Protest*, New York, Orbis Books, 1984.

to collaborate with him for the arrival of his Kingdom not through an uncritical acceptance of the prevailing powers and situations, but by opening themselves up to the future of God for humanity, by refusing to conform to any inhuman and ungodly reality. The engagement of the laity in the world cannot, then, be a service to maintain it in its present form but to help it to transform itself so that it may become what it ought to be in the plan and promise of God.

Precisely because, as we said earlier, God's Kingdom is broader than the Church, the laity will enter into close collaboration with many forces that are at work for creating a new world and a new society. The involvement of the laity will bring them also in close contact with men and women of other great Asian religions. In their collaboration with political and social movements or with other religions, the Christian laity will maintain that critical discernment which flows from the hope of God's Kingdom, which while being present in every one of them, transcends them simply because it is God's Kingdom and not a human project, even though human collaboration and involvement remain imperative.

### *The Duty to Safeguard Diversity*

What has been said, makes it abundantly clear why the laity should enjoy legitimate freedom in order to fulfil their vocation in the world. The commitment to the creation of a new world, the building up of God's Kingdom and the instilling of hope are stupendous tasks which require freedom and creativity. Any clerical control exercised over the laity in temporal matters, specially if characterised by ignorance and lack of competence, can seriously impair the true mission of the Church in the world. This, of course, does not exclude that both the clergy and the laity can dialogue and reach deeper understanding on temporal matters.

There should be no unhealthy dependence of the laity on the clergy in temporal matters for which the clergy cannot pretend to have solutions. The clergy can be of help to the laity by bringing to them "the consolation of the Gospel" but are not to force their opinions on the laity. For the various manifestations of the Kingdom in the life of the world with which the laity are in contact may not be always subject to the visible aspect of the Church and the control of its authority. Similarly, it may be too much to expect that every initiative of the laity in the world should fit into the existing ecclesial

structures and organisations, specially if we take into account the diversity and complexity of the Asian world.

The role of the laity and the goal of the Church as a whole converge upon the promotion of God's Kingdom in the world. The Church itself is a sign and instrument of the unity of humanity with God and of the whole of humankind—a unity which is the final state of humanity freed from all that enslaves. The involvement of the laity in the world, therefore, is directed to the very same goal for which the Church itself exists, even if it may not always conform to the ecclesial structures and organisations.<sup>50</sup>

One may wonder whether the unity of the Church-community will not be impaired if the laity and their movements take their own course and do not conform to ecclesiastical authority and structures of action. Here is a very real and practical difficulty and a source of conflicts and tensions, too. It is true that unity is indispensable in the Church. But unity is not arrived at by forcing on the laity certain view-points, rules and regulations. The Church leaders who have the duty of maintaining unity have no less the obligation of safeguarding *diversity*. This diversity, specially in regard to Church's relation to the Asian world, is warranted by the demands of the situation. Hence, the real solution to the above practical difficulty is not enforcement of ordinance but dialogue and discernment which will preserve both unity and diversity. Discerning what belongs to the Kingdom cannot be the monopoly of the clergy and office-holders in the Church but a common task in which the entire Church-community is to be involved.

The whole question comes to a sharper focus when concrete options and decisions have to be made. There can be divergent view among the lay people themselves as to the solutions, ways and means to be adopted. In such a situation there is the temptation to let the clergy decide for the laity. This would mean the laity's failure in facing the problems thrown up by the world. What the Council advocates is that the laity themselves should honestly discern the question and come to some understanding:

Often enough the Christian view of things will itself suggest some specific solution in certain circumstances. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter. Even against the intention of their proponents

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50. Cf. The Final Communication from the CBCI to the Synod of Bishops: 1987, in *Report of the CBCI General Meeting, Goa, 1986*, New Delhi, CBCI Centre 1986.

however, solutions proposed on one side or another may be easily confused by many people with the Gospel message. Hence it is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed in the aforementioned solutions to appropriate the Church's authority for his opinion. They should always try to enlighten one another through honest discussion, preserving mutual charity and caring above all for the common good.<sup>51</sup>

### *Encouraging Local Lay-movements*

The question of the involvement of the laity in the world, with the specifications we have made and the consequences we have drawn, brings naturally to our attention the traditional forms of apostolate of the laity, bound up very concretely with the many lay associations and movements. In the light of what the Council says about the relationship Church-world-Kingdom and in the light of the above considerations, we could briefly reflect on the lay associations and the role they play.

Historically, most of the existing associations originated in the pre-Vatican II period when the laity were still considered the extended arms of the hierarchy in the world. Some are riddled with inner squabbles and have become a spent-force. But it would not be fair to forget that many of these associations did try to reform and re-organize themselves after the Council. Yet the spirit in which they had been originally conceived and the theology which sustained them seem to still permeate these associations. The new perspectives opened up by the Council in the area of the relationship of the Church to the world do not seem to have affected them deeply.

If these associations and movements are to help the laity to commit themselves in the Asian world, they ought to undergo a thorough revision. They need to be imbued with the spirit of Christian hope. While not denying the good works being done by them, we should also note that these movements and associations, when they get established in Asia, are not seldom a hindrance to the emergence of local lay-movements. It is sad to note that, as a matter of fact, there are very few movements which originated in the Asian soil as a response to concrete situations from within. The indiscriminate introduction and adoption of associations from outside lead to stifling the creative involvement of the Asian laity. Instead of encouraging the laity to give expression to their Christian faith and hope through local association and movements, the clergy often supply them with associations and movements which have different experience as their basis.

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<sup>51</sup>. *Gaudium et Spes*, 43.

The demands of Asian situation and need for relevance have inspired the emergence of a few groups and movements which try to live and translate the Gospel message of hope in a radical way, in interaction with society. Often these groups and movements are limited to certain areas, to certain socio-cultural milieu and they are at work at the microlevel. Experience bears out that these groups and movements and their initiatives not only do not often receive encouragement and support, but also become objects of suspicion and allegations on the part of some of the clergy. The measure of a Church-community's acceptance of the Christian message of hope is evident from the way it relates to these groups and movements. They are also a test-case, specially for the clergy, of the authentic concern for the role of the laity and their legitimate freedom in their mission to the world.

### PART III

#### The Laity and the Local Church—A Hermeneutical Role

##### *Response in a Context*

What we said in the first two parts leads us to the question of the laity in relation to the local church. I take it for granted that the readers are familiar with the current discussions concerning the definition of local church and the terminological distinctions between local church, particular church, individual church, etc.<sup>52</sup> The local Church is the presence of the mystery of the whole Church in a particular socio-cultural milieu. It is, as *Lumen Gentium* teaches "us, in and out of these local churches that the one Catholic Church comes to exist."<sup>53</sup>

If the local churches are not something like branch offices of a

52. Among numerous works available on this question we list a few important ones here: H. DE LUBAC, *Les églises particulières dans l'église universelle*, Paris, Aubier, 1971; H.M. LEGRAND, "La réalisation de l'église en un lieu," in *Initiation à la pratique de la théologie*, ed. by B. LAURET-F. REFOULE, Vol. III, *Dogmatique 2*, Editions du Cerf, Paris 1983, pp. 143-345; id., "Inverser Babel mission de l'église: La vocation des églises particulières au sein de la mission universelle," in *Spiritus* 11 (1970), pp. 323-346; E. LAMNE, "L'Eglise locale et l'église universelle. Actualité et portée du thème", in *Irenikon* 43 (1970), pp. 481-511; A. PIERIS, *Local Churches of Asia*, Manila, 1982 (Reprint from SEDOS Bulletin 1982). Cf. also the contributions of G. Alberigo, J. Kerkhof and others at the Intercontinental Symposium on the Local Church, Brugges, June 1985. (The contributions of the Symposium are available to me in mimeographed notes. The publication of the papers and proceedings was announced. But at the time of writing I am not aware of their publication.)

53. *Lumen Gentium*, 23.

transnational corporation, or like parts of a country, it is because the inner constitutional elements of the Church are not divisible in quantitative parts. The call of God by which the Church-community is gathered, the Word of God, the grace of the Spirit, the ministry, the promise, hope, and the celebration of the Eucharist are realities which defy quantitative divisions. They can be present only as integral, whole and in an organic way. This is not to say that they exist as abstract universals; on the contrary, these realities can and do exist only in definite modes in particular human groupings with their specific history, culture and problems.

We should also add another important consideration. The Church, that springs from the initiative of God, is also the fruit of the *response of faith* of a concrete group of men and women—without which there is no Church-community—to the divine call and to the promptings of the Spirit heard and followed in their particular history. As the Church would not have come into existence historically if the call of Jesus was not met with the response of apostles in the definite social, political and cultural context of Palestine, so also today the Church cannot come into existence without the response of believers in their life context.<sup>54</sup>

By 'local', therefore, we do not mean simply a geographical circumscription in which the Church exists. A local church should be understood above all in terms of believers who share a common experience of a determined socio-cultural situation with all its challenges. If the Church is the work of God (*a Deo*) it is also a reality of people—*ex hominibus*. This reality of the people, the 'local', is itself part of the mystery of the Church which is made of both divine and human elements.<sup>55</sup>

In relation to their common experience, the believers come to a deeper understanding among themselves of the meaning of the Gospel and its import for their life and for the world around them. It is by interpreting *together* (hence the importance of dialogue) their situation as well as their faith, that clear common goals and programmes of action vis-à-vis the world will be formed. Seen in this light, the socio-cultural milieu, the 'local', is not something extraneous, but is

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54. Cf. the excellent paper of J. KOMONCHAK, *Towards a Theology of Local Church*, presented at the First Meeting of the Theological Advisory Committee of FABC held in Hong Kong, April 4-13, 1986. On the thought of Komonchak, cf. J.H. BRACKEN, "Ecclesiology and the Problems of One and Many" in *Theological Studies* 43 (1982) pp. 298-311.



part of the process through which the Church is born anew everyday<sup>56</sup> through a fresh response and commitment of the believers in a specific socio-cultural environment.

Just as the universal Church would be an abstraction if not concretely related to the local churches in which it is present, so too the role of the laity would remain a platonic ideal if it is not related to the local church. The mission and the involvement of the laity takes place in a definite, concrete context in a particular socio-political, economic and cultural circumstance.<sup>57</sup>

It is here that the laity, living in the world and its realities, have a very important hermeneutical role to play in making, the Church truly local, and in deepening the understanding of faith in relation to their experience of the world. This hermeneutical role cannot be substituted by the clergy and the hierarchy nor by theologians, precisely because the questions to which the Church community needs to answer derive from the experience of the world in the midst of which the life of the laity is carried on. It is the laity who can give the concreteness which is important for the local church.

### *Sense of Faith in Terms of Life*

The laity can play a crucial hermeneutical role because they are endowed with the sense of faith.<sup>58</sup> The sense of faith is something like an instinct (*phronema*) leading the believers, so to say, to hit upon genuine faith responses. The sense of faith, however, cannot be identified with the ascertainment of the orthodoxy of the formulae of faith. There is much more to it. Faith is above all a commitment, a response to the call of God. The sense of faith is to be interpreted in terms of life, since the call of God comes through the concrete history and the response too is to be mediated through concrete decisions and actions in history. The sense of faith then is also the capacity to discover in life and history what is and what is not in conformity with the Gospel, and then act in consonance with faith. Here we are reminded of Newman's distinction between notional and real

56. Venerable BEDE "Nam quotidie et Ecclesia gignit Ecclesiam" P.L. 93 166d.

57. On laity vis-a-vis the Asian situation, cf. F. WILFRED, *Sunset in the East? The Asian Realities Challenging the Church and its Laity Today*, Hong Kong 1986 (FABC paper No. 45. Position paper prepared for the FABC General Assembly, Tokyo, September 1986).

58. Cf. H. VORGRIMMER, "From Sensus Fidei to Consensus Fidelium," in *Concilium* 180 (4/1985), pp. 3-11.

assent.<sup>59</sup> Notional assent of faith can coexist with silent apostasy in life. The real assent, instead, is directed to Christian faith as a lived and experienced reality.

All this may sound a little abstract. It can be very concretely illustrated by the events in the Philippines, in February this year, that marked a turning-point in its history. That the oppressive regime of President Marcos was acting in violation of human rights and freedom and against Christian faith which upholds the dignity of man as the image of God, was perceived almost instinctively by the faithful in the numerous basic Christian communities all over the country. Many of the laity responded to this situation in small but significant ways. There was a growth in this perception and action which culminated when, as though giving expression to the sense of the faithful, the 114 bishops of the Philippines condemned the manipulation in the elections and declared that a government that assumed and retained power through fraudulent means lost its moral basis.

All this cannot be simply reduced to a question of politics. It is a question of the Christian believers of a local church answering to a particular situation, impelled by their sense of faith. It was a very difficult process of discernment which the bishops underwent. They could not be neutral and indifferent to the sense of faith of the people expressing itself in so many ways and for so many years. Only such concrete responses in the political, social and cultural fields on the part of the laity can really build up the local church and bear witness to the transforming power of Christian faith. It is in this way, through the response of the laity, that the faith and the Gospel are kept alive.

This sense of faith of the laity in relation to experiences in their local churches will also be able to discover in the Christian tradition what belongs to the essence of faith. While the clergy by their position and training may tend to underline tradition, the active sense of faith of the laity will be able to relate in a living way the realities of life and history to the Gospel.

### *Interpreting Christian Tradition in Today's Asia*

The hermeneutical role which the laity are called to play in Asia does not rule out the place of centuries of Christian tradition. For

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59. Cf. J. WALGRAVE, "Newman's 'On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine', " *ibid.* pp. 23-30.

it is true, in a sense, that Christianity does not begin from zero-point every time. What is important to note, however, is that the traditions of the past need to be interpreted in the light of the present action of God and the call of the Spirit in the present life of the local church. The interpretative power of the sense of faith of the laity is assisted by tradition, by the past, but tradition cannot take over the present nor substitute for the duty of the local church to move towards new horizons following the promptings of the Spirit.

As long as the past is the criterion, the clergy through their knowledge and education dominate over the laity. But if the point of departure is the present action of God in the Church-community and the world in response to which the local church is being gradually built up, supported by the past experience of Christianity, then the role of the laity becomes vital and indispensable.

The whole advantage of the past is that it has clear models and patterns to offer. One can know it, describe it. It is, so to say, well under control both in its positive and negative aspects. Therefore it can tend to neutralize any efforts towards a new future. The future, instead, is something which has to evolve as the fruit of our present approach and action. Therefore it involves a certain uncertainty concerning the shape of the things to come and a divergence of views regarding the methods to be adopted.

At this juncture, the temptation is strong to let the weight of the past rule over the present, or to fit into already known categories of tradition whatever new is struggling to be born. Such a temptation must be resisted. This is important in the life of the Asian churches. An unhealthy dependence on past traditions and institutions can have the effect of depriving the laity of their legitimate role in the local church and make them insensitive to the present challenges.

There is, of course, the important question of the continuity, identity and universality of Christian faith. Just as the past has to be interpreted in the light of the present, so too the past must be continued, not by thrusting it upon the local churches of Asia, but by a process of "reception". The laity play a hermeneutical role in this "reception".

Reception, as we noted in Part I, is a process by which a Church-community makes its own, by subjective appropriation, something which did not originate from within its history and experience. This has been a well-attested reality in history. For example, the early Councils were convoked by a limited section of the Church, but were

subsequently, sometimes after centuries, received by other churches. A typical example is the Council of Constantinople I which was convoked exclusively by the East without a single representative from the West. Yet it was received by the West as being in conformity with its experience of faith. This is true not only of Councils but also of liturgical traditions, laws and disciplines, etc. Reception is not a mere juridical act or assent. The past heritage, institutions and traditions need to be received in the churches of Asia and in the Third World at large not passively but actively, through a process of discerning assimilation on the part of the laity. The laity as an active subject should discern the inner connection between the faith as lived and experienced in the local community and what has been transmitted from the past.

#### *The Laity—Subject of Inculturation*

Another area in which the laity ought to play a hermeneutical role is the field of inculturation. In a Christian community where the laity, together with the ordained ministers, read the signs of the times, interpret the meaning of their faith and are actively involved in the world, inculturation will follow naturally.<sup>60</sup> Inculturation will be a spontaneous process of a community becoming truly a local church, not a second step.

If so, the laity themselves should be the subjects in any genuine and lasting process of inculturation. Therefore any introduction of inculturation from without, and irrespective of the organic growth of the local church is questionable. What is more serious is that the imposition of a strait-jacket of inculturation from above, mostly by the clergy, can reinforce the clerical domination and deprive the laity of their right of active participation in the process of inculturation. This, however does not preclude the help which certain models, paradigms and experiments can offer to the Christian communities in their process of inculturation. Their role is limited; therefore, their importance should not be exaggerated.

What we have said should lead us to critically review the way inculturation has been conceived and practised in the Asian local churches.<sup>61</sup> Has it been truly a part of the process of becoming a

60. Cf. A. PIERIS, "Local Churches of Asia" (note 52); id., "Western Models of Inculturation: Are they Applicable in Non-Semitic Asia?" in *Vidyajyoti* 49 (1985), pp. 435-445; cf. also M. AMALADOSS, *Faith, Culture and Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Delhi, ISI, 1985.

61. M. AMALADOSS makes such an evaluation concerning liturgy in India: "Relaunching the Indian Liturgy. Some Reflections on our Experiments," in *Vidyajyoti* 49 (1985) pp. 446-445.

local church? What role have the laity played in it. Have the laity been really subjects of inculturation or passive objects? This assessment and evaluation could lead the Asian churches to adopt a more organic understanding and practice of inculturation in which the laity will be the active agents.

### CONCLUSION

The various theological and pastoral questions concerning the laity can be traced to three vital points. First of all, underlying the present theological image of the laity is a conflict between a christomonistic understanding of the Church and ministry, and a pneumatological vision. The place of the laity and their mission will become meaningful and relevant only if we pass on from christomonism to pneumatology.

Secondly, there is also a conflict between the understanding of the relationship of the laity to the world due to present divergent views regarding the Church-world relationship. This is the conflict between the world conceived as the arena of Christian action and world interpreted as the locus where God is bringing about his Kingdom, where the new is taking shape. Further, there is a world of difference between the world of secularization and the world of poverty and misery of Asia. In Asia today we need to underscore the dimension of hope.

Thirdly, and finally, an image of a laity, well-defined but in the abstract, contrasts with the image of the laity whose identity is to be perceived in close relationship to the concrete local church. The hermeneutical role of the laity assumes today great importance. It is only by interpreting faith out of their experience of the Asian world, and their experience from faith, that the laity will pave the way for the birth of true local and inculturated churches in Asia.

# The Cutting Edge of the Extraordinary Synod\*

"A MISSIONARY OPENNESS FOR THE INTEGRAL  
SALVATION OF THE WORLD"

Parmananda R. DIVARKAR, S.J.

**W**HEN Pope John Paul II announced an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops to be held on the twentieth anniversary of the closure of the Second Vatican Council, the news was greeted with great interest and not a little apprehension. During the brief period of preparation, doubts were expressed about the intentions that lay behind it and its possible outcome. Whilst some hoped that it would set right what they judged to be wrong in the post-conciliar Church, many others feared that it might reverse the movement for renewal that had been launched by the Council. During the sessions, the press felt frustrated because it had nothing exciting to report: some journalists wrote the whole thing off as a non-event. Today, after eleven months, there is a widespread impression that powerful forces are at work to set the clock back, instead of moving forward along the lines traced by Vatican II, as was urged by the Synod; and one heard little about the Synod, except for an occasional follow-up meeting in Rome.

So at the beginning of our own meeting, which is also meant as a follow-up, we must honestly ask ourselves: "How important is this Synod, and how seriously must it be taken by the National Advisory Council?" The answer, it would seem, is not: "We must make an act of faith in its importance and try our best to take it seriously," but rather: "If we really take it seriously, it will in fact be important for us and for the whole Church." In other words, the Synod in a very quiet, unobtrusive way has opened up vast possibilities for progress in the Christian life; if we take advantage of the opportunities within our reach, significant results can be achieved. It depends on us—and that is a serious responsibility.

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\*This is the keynote address given at the annual meeting of the National Advisory Council (N.A.C.) in Patna, November 8-10, 1986. Quotations are from the *Relatio Finalis* of the Extraordinary Synod, unless otherwise indicated.

We may recall here what a member of the Synod said, right at the beginning, regarding the task to be accomplished. He referred to the situation in the post-conciliar Church and quoted a native proverb saying: a tree that falls to the ground makes more noise than a whole forest that is growing up; he appealed to the assembled bishops to concentrate their attention on the vast forest that had risen from the good seed sown by Vatican II in the fertile soil of the modern world. In fact, the Synod did just that. If there was not much noise, it was because it concerned itself chiefly with the growth of the forest, and its main thrust was to urge a more thorough implementation of the Second Vatican Council, which it recognized as a very special grace of God to the Church of today, calling for a persevering response that was neither superficial nor partial but global and in depth. Changing the metaphor, we could say that like a well manufactured knife, the Synod had one smooth, flat, innocuous edge, and one sharp cutting edge. It is our responsibility to wield this knife in such a way that it serves its purpose effectively—that is, it really cuts.

### *Our task*

And how great the responsibility is may be gauged from the following: a very striking feature of the Synod, in comparison with the Council, was that a large majority of its members—more than 60% (103/165)—came from the so-called Third World. This reflected a change in the distribution of the world Catholic population: in 1965 Europe and North America accounted for 52% (308/590 m.); in 1985 for only 41% (338/825). This surely points to a new role for the young churches; and among them India stands as an elder sister—indeed as a much older sister. If in the political field, India is looked up to for leadership by the non-aligned nations, in spite of our own many domestic problems, how much more reasonable it is that the Church in India should offer a service of meaningful initiative in the follow-up of the Synod and the more thorough implementation of Vatican II. We have so much on our side: a long history and a rich variety of ecclesial traditions, a wealth of potential in our people, who have shown time and again, and most recently on the occasion of the papal visit, how generously and effectively they can respond to a significant challenge. Could we not make a direct appeal to the people—or rather, put across to them the appeal of the Synod?

And let us begin by addressing an appeal to ourselves, recalling the special link that binds together the Second Vatican Council and

the National Advisory Council, since the latter traces its origin to the Church in India Seminar, whose whole purpose was precisely the post-conciliar renewal to which the Synod calls the whole Church. It would seem, then, that the N.A.C. has a very special responsibility to carry forward this renewal, by fulfilling its advisory role to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. Many questions are being raised, and will be tackled at this meeting, about the function and the functioning of the N.A.C. We might make a test-case of the follow-up of the Synod that is proposed to us for discussion and eventual recommendation: can we really and effectively help the bishops to carry through a meaningful programme for achieving what the Synod calls "four successive phases: a deeper and more extensive knowledge of the Council, its interior assimilation, its loving affirmation and its implementation?" It would seem that a first step for this, and a token of sincerity, would be precisely to vitalize the N.A.C.

From the replies to the preliminary questionnaire sent out in preparation for this meeting, it appears that Vatican II has a salutary impact on the Church in India and produced satisfactory results, whilst at the same time giving rise to some difficulties. But among the rank and file of the faithful, *knowledge* of the Council is minimal and much that had once been learnt is now forgotten. However the main deficiency that has been noted is in the appreciation and *assimilation* of the spirit of the Council, and this is said not only of the rank and file. The result is that *affirmation* and *implementation* are largely a matter of external conformity, whilst mentalities and ways of acting remain very much what they were before. This is an inadequate summary of the situation as seen by a small but representative group. It fits into the picture that emerged from the fraternal sharing of the bishop at the Synod itself. And the practical conclusion it leads to is that the N.A.C., before deliberating on the recommendation it will make to our bishops, must itself recapture the experience of Vatican II, as the Synod tried to do.

We shall attempt this by reflecting on what Vatican II was all about. There have been many penetrating analyses of the situation in the world and in the Church during the last forty years, since the Second World War; and there are ingenious models proposed to explain the dynamics at work in the Council and the post-conciliar period. We shall keep all that in mind; but above all we must have recourse to what Pope John XXIII himself had at heart, and which he expressed in a simple word that has become very popular: "*aggiornamento*"—updating. The Synod picks up this word in the last



section of its Final Report, and cautions against a facile interpretation of its meaning. What it implies, says the Synod, is "a missionary openness for the integral salvation of the world." So let us ask ourselves what is the world, what is integral salvation, what is missionary openness.

### *"The world"*

According to Vatican II, the modern world is characterized by rapid change and a dynamic view of human society: "History itself speeds along on so rapid a course that an individual person can hardly keep abreast of it. The destiny of the human community has become all of a piece, where once the various groups had a kind of private history of their own. Thus the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. In consequence, there has arisen a new series of problems, a series as important as can be, calling for a new effort of analysis and synthesis" (GS, 5).

What is called the Modern Age was ushered in five hundred years ago precisely by an acceleration of the pace of change in society. Before that, the common experience of the human race had been that healthy, growth-producing change came gradually from within and was assimilated almost imperceptibly, whilst rapid change came from the outside as an unwelcome intrusion to be resisted as far as possible: it might be an invasion or an earthquake, but it was usually violent and destructive. What began to happen at the end of the 15th century is that due to a number of factors, rapid change came from within—from within civil society in Europe and from within the western church. It is not surprising, though regrettable, that the Catholic Church reacted by treating these changes as threats coming from the outside. At the Council of Trent it defined itself in such a way that the changes were in fact left on the outside, and the Catholic Church became more distinctly the Roman Catholic Church: that is, it was roman not only in its allegiance to the See of Rome, but in its mentality and language, its structures and style; moreover, a stable uniformity, with only carefully monitored adjustments, was accepted and established as a desirable ideal. As this was the period of European colonial and missionary expansion, there came into existence what may well be called a worldwide colonial Church—instead of a universal communion of local churches, where "pluriformity" is "true catholicity", according to the Synod document, which follows

the Council in saying: "the one and unique Catholic Church exists in and through the particular churches."

Around the beginning of the 19th century, a series of revolutions, political, economic and cultural, brought about a further acceleration in the pace of change, and new patterns in society. Once again the Roman Church reacted by defining itself still more specifically and by reinforcing its defenses against the pressures to change. Pius IX roundly condemned the proposition that the Pope "can and should reconcile himself to progress, liberalism and modern civilization."<sup>1</sup> The situation of Catholicism after Vatican I may be compared to that of a country where a state of emergency has been declared, with a consequent curtailment of civic liberties whilst the government and its agencies assume greater control, allegedly for the sake of national security. There was indeed security within the Church, and christian life and activity flourished, but with little impact on the world.

The next stage in the process of rapid change from within—with an incalculable increase in velocity—came with World War II and the atom bomb. All human institutions were profoundly affected; some perished altogether, and others were transformed beyond recognition. But the Catholic Church emerged from the ordeal more alive and strong, more united and disciplined, more like itself than ever. It is very significant that whilst the world was still dazed and bleeding from the catastrophe, Pius XII could stand up and boldly proclaim the dogma of the Assumption. That gesture said more about the self-image of the Church than about the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin. Catholics did not learn or believe anything that they did not already profess about Mary, but their confidence in themselves and in the papacy received an enormous boost. This is not to deny that there was also a strong affirmation of faith in transcendental values and the power of God—and the Pope had this in mind.

### *"Integral salvation"*

The obvious thing to do at this point would have been to stay just as we were and invite the bruised and disoriented world to come to us for healing and direction. This is what many Catholics still feel we should be doing. But the war had brought the vivid realiza-

1. From the *Syllabus of Errors*, 1864. To be fair, one must read the proposition in its original context of a previous papal document; but it aroused a strong negative reaction in Europe.

tion that it is not enough for the Church to save souls by rescuing them from a wicked world—the world itself has to be saved; a just and fraternal society must be established if humanity is not to destroy itself; the total human being, the entire human race and all culture must be redeemed, and the whole creation must be brought to God in Christ. This cannot be done by standing in splendid isolation. Integral salvation requires that, in the words of Vatican II, “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (GS, 1). So, taking the cue from John XXIII, Vatican II opted for moving the Church out into the modern world, in spite of the sacrifices and risks, the heart-aches that this involved. But in fact, the decision had already been taken long ago, right at the beginning of our history, in the Council of Jerusalem. The question then was whether Christianity should remain within the well-defined and solidly established framework of Judaism, where it was born and in which the first disciplines felt so much at home, or launch out into the strange, filthy, unpredictable pagan world. The answer, then and now, was inspired by faith in the mission and promise of the Risen Lord, rather than on human calculations of security: the Catholic Church must be a truly universal Church and not simply an enlarged Jewish Church or an overgrown Roman Church.

This option has created, then and now, many problems and a good deal of confusion. The way of facing the situation has been, then and now, to be clear and firm about fundamentals, and very open and flexible with regard to non-essentials. This has been imaginatively expressed by saying that Vatican II had a double thrust: to make Catholicism more christian, and Christianity more human—that is, to shift the accent from what was peculiarly Catholic (like latin in the liturgy) to what was basically christian (like fraternal love among the followers of Christ), and to articulate these basics in terms that were meaningful to people today (like liberation instead of redemption, which says the same thing but in the outdated context of the process for freeing slaves). The Council surely realized that it is easier to be a Catholic than just a christian or merely human: we know exactly what to do to be good Catholics, but there is no knowing what may be demanded of us as Christians or as members of a very messy human race. Nevertheless, the Council made its choice, trusting in God, and in the last twenty years we have come to appreciate the practical consequences. We may not like all that has happened, but

whatever may be our attitude to the present situation, or our assessment of the problems of the post-conciliar Church, the Synod makes it clear that the solution is not to go back but to move resolutely and more thoroughly forward. All the more so since we are today facing "greater problems and anguish."

The Synod was well aware of—one is tempted to say it was excessively and obsessively preoccupied with—the dangers of secularism: "special attention," it said, "must be paid to the phenomenon of secularism"—"which leaves aside the dimension of mystery, indeed neglects and denies it"—and "is a reduction of the integral vision of man." When thus defined, obviously secularism is unacceptable.<sup>2</sup> But in fact, throughout her history the Church has borrowed ways of thought and action from the world—and it could hardly do otherwise. Much of what today looks very ecclesiastical, and indeed clerical, was once upon a time taken from the world—like the overly legalistic understanding and practice of authority, called jurisdiction, which is surely derived from civil society rather than the Gospel. If a certain taking on of the ways of the world looks strange and unacceptable to us now, it is because for too long the Church has ceased to dialogue with the world and created a culture of her own that is becoming less and less intelligible. That is not the way to safeguard the mystery of the Church, about which the Synod was so concerned. And this brings us to the last phrase of the synodal statement.

*"Missionary openness"*

Traditionally, the service of the Church to the world has been conceived mainly on the model of one-way communication: the apostle gave, the people received; the apostle stood firm, the people had to change, to be converted; the apostle got orders from above, the people had to accept the consequences. Today, both psychology and theology, as well as experience, tell us that there is no effective, personal communication that is not two-way, that is not somehow dialogue. Hence Vatican II, speaking on behalf of "the whole people of God gathered together by Christ," says: "This Council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with the entire human family with which it is bound up as well as its respect and love for that family, than by engaging with it in conversation" (GS, 3). And the Synod insists: "Dialogue must not be opposed to mission."

2. It should be noted that the word *secular* has a different connotation in the West and in India.

Indeed, there can be no mission without dialogue, just as there can be no salvation without the divine-human dialogue that is the Incarnation. This means that Christians—all Christians, no matter what their position—to be fruitful in their apostolate, must be ready to listen, to learn, to take to heart; they must be ready to change, to be transformed. Here is something new, and for some it is deeply disturbing. It is perceived as a threat to one's identity, especially by those who have been taught to define their identity in terms of being different from others, as is the case of many Catholics, in India and elsewhere, whereas in fact to be Catholic means to have more things in common with people.

At the organizational level also, the new missionary openness creates difficulties. An institution can no longer be a self-contained entity taking unilateral decisions, and going its own way. Briefly and colloquially, the rules of the game have changed, and there are many, in all ranks of the Church, that either do not realize this, or do not accept it, or simply do not know how to operate according to a new behavioural pattern. Much of the tension associated with the post-conciliar age is due to this. It's like two teams playing two different games against each other, at the same time. It would be helpful to reflect whether the problems of the N.A.C. are not also because of this. The N.A.C., or rather a pastoral Council, was conceived in the post-conciliar euphoria of The Church in India Seminar. A team was elected to play a new game, according to a new understanding of what the Church is and how it functions—as a communion, in dialogue. But the game is being played according to the old rules of one-way communication.

It may be some consolation to us, though in itself it is a sad thing, that complaints about lack of dialogue and respectful listening do not come from the laity alone. At the Synod there was abundant evidence, very discreetly expressed, that bishops from all over the world feel that there is not enough collegiality, in the spirit of Vatican II, manifested in the functioning of the Church at the highest levels. And it is these same bishops who said in their final statement, approved by the Pope, and presumably accepted by the Vatican staff that participated in the Synod, that "because the Church is a communion, there must be participation and co-responsibility at all of her levels. This general principle must be understood in diverse ways in diverse areas." There is hope for the future: the question is not whether there should be co-responsibility at the national, regional, diocesan and parish level, but what is the honest meaningful way of practising it.

The problems of new rules and a new spirit affects other spheres of Catholic life too. A notable example is the liturgy: in many places, at present, neither those who yearn for a true renewal nor those who pine after the old and familiar are satisfied. It is not very surprising, though somewhat disconcerting, that the Pope has now permitted bishops to allow the celebration of the old eucharistic liturgy. Similar restorations may take place in other spheres, if we do not move resolutely forward. Jesus had foreseen this kind of situation when he said that one cannot put new wine into old bottles. If you want new wine, you must provide new bottles. But, he adds shrewdly, many will rather have the old wine. However, the Synod is not satisfied with the solution of throwing out the new wine and making do with the old, till it is exhausted. Rather, it calls for a change of mind and heart that will make us fit receptacles for the grace of renewal. In the introductory statement at the Synod, based on the reports from the episcopal conferences, it was said: "Post-conciliar deficiencies cannot be dealt with using pre-conciliar measures." It is not enough to take "disciplinary and administrative" action. The Synod itself expresses this more positively by recalling the teaching of Vatican II that the whole Church must herself be in a constant process of conversion if she is to work with credibility for the conversion of the world, that she must herself be evangelized in order to evangelize. Says the Synod: "The evangelization of unbelievers in fact presupposes the self-evangelization of the baptized and also, in a sense, of deacons, priests and bishops." There is no explanation of the special sense in which the clergy are in need of evangelization. We are free to speculate on that. What appears from the replies to the preliminary questionnaire in preparation for our meeting is that whilst no one is worried about the conversion of deacons, many are concerned about more helpful attitudes among priests and bishops, as well as in all the baptized. There is not much point in discussing the follow-up of the Synod, if serious attention is not paid to this important item in the programme it proposes. Change is not being asked for merely for love of novelty. But just as formerly an unchanging uniformity was maintained for the sake of security, discipline and efficiency, so today change is wanted because there can be no growth, and indeed no life, without it. And let us admit that though impressive external arguments are sometimes brought up against this or that change, the underlying resistance to all change is psychological, and must be treated as such. But let us conclude with a brief theological reflection.

*Paschal transformation*

The mention of life brings us to a final consideration: we have seen that the change that is called for, the renewal that Vatican II had so much at heart, is not—as the Synod also reminds us—merely a matter of external adjustments. We must now realize that what is required is nothing less than an entering through death into a fuller life. "Aggiornamento" is properly understood, according to the Synod, in the light of the Paschal Mystery—the mystery of life through death. We need to take to heart what Jesus so powerfully expressed and so uncompromisingly put into practice: "A grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields rich fruit."

If the Son of God himself had to die and rise again to be Christ, the Saviour of the world, is it outrageous to propose that the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, must in some true sense die and rise again to be the sacrament of salvation to the world of today? The grain dies but life is not extinguished; rather it grows and multiplies. In an analogous way, the life of which the Church is the bearer will not die but the concrete shape that that life takes must be constantly renewed by a paschal process of death and resurrection. Here is the crux of the problem we are facing in the more thorough implementation of the Second Vatican Council, to which the Extraordinary Synod has challenged the whole Church. It is quite literally the crux—the Cross. So as we take up our task of advising the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India on the follow-up of the Synod, let us keep before us the parting words of this Synod: "It seems to us that in the present-day difficulties God wishes to teach us more deeply the value, the importance and the centrality of the cross of Jesus Christ." The ultimate cutting edge of all Christian action is the cross of Christ.

# Challenges to Christian Theology in India from Islam

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

**A**S the Indian national culture is composite, containing various elements and tendencies and holding them together in dialectical tension, so will a fully developed Christian theology in India be. In the following notes I shall confine myself to indicating a few questions and problems that arise in the context of our encounter with Muslim faith and practice and with Muslim religious thought.<sup>1</sup> We shall further indicate some of the tasks facing a Christian theology intent upon promoting Christian-Muslim relations on the level of spiritual communion and theological reflection. I shall not attempt to show here what function the theological encounter with Islam could have in the context of the theological dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity and between Hinduism and Islam. There is also no need to labour the point that Islam constitutes one of the important and abiding dimensions not only of the life and culture of India and South Asia but of the modern world at large.

## *1. Historical and theological groundwork*

We need a full history of the theological encounter between Christians and Muslims to enable us to discern, amidst much in the past which is of polemical or purely defensive character, what can lead us, Christians and Muslims, on to a fruitful common theological reflection. Such a history would have to take into account the varieties of cultural and historical contexts and see how these variations influenced theological positions. At the same time, the continuity and unity underlying such diversity will emerge.

Two areas of Christian theological reflection more generally would seem to be today of capital importance, as they affect and modify specifically Christian-Muslim issues: the Christian theology of religions, and the relationship of the two accepted modes of Chris-

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1. Throughout this essay I am much indebted to Maurice BORRMANS, "Théologie et Dialogue: Questions posées à la théologie par les interlocuteurs en dialogue islamo-chrétien", *Euntes Docete*, XXXIV (1981), pp. 307-25.



tian outreach, usually called, in our days, dialogue and mission. There is no need to say more about this here.

### 3. *Scriptural theology*

Muslims designate themselves, the Jews and the Christians, taken together, as 'people of the Scripture'. But there lies concealed in this apparently acceptable designation, a radically different perception which Christians and Muslims have in their respective understanding of the genesis of Scripture and of the nature of inspiration and revelation. Hence in the Christian-Muslim context we need to explain more in detail the content, mode of reception and significance in faith of Holy Scripture. In the light of the Muslims' selective acceptance of the Biblical Scriptures, the relative importance of *all* the books of the O.T. and N.T., and their mutual complementarity, needs elucidation.

The Muslim accusation of the "corruption of the Scriptures", be it textual or as to its interpreted meanings, must be met by a scholarly discussion. It is not enough to show the reliability of the text of the Bible. Christian theology must also reflect on the deeper reasons for the fact that the earliest Christian communities did not find it necessary to preserve the sayings of Jesus word by word and in the language he spoke. Why does the Christian faith not relate to the "original text" of its Scriptures in the same way as Muslim faith does to that of its own? Muslims would like to be enlightened as to why Christians do not care, in the same way as Muslims do, to have an "authentic book" as it were of revealed Scripture with an absolutely "reliable, certain" text. In other words: why have the adjectives just mentioned a different meaning in the Christian and Muslim context?

Is revelation bound up primarily with a book or with a person? Is it promoted by progressive understanding and re-reading, or by repetition of an unchangeable content in geographically ever-wider areas? Does the translation of the original text of Scripture necessarily mean the progressive loss of its original meaning and thus the relative diminution of its initial message? Or, can we think of some kind of guarantee for the preservation of its original content in the course of history, and an ever deeper appropriation of its significance? If one has to do with a plurality of inspired books within a 'revelatory tradition', does one have to conceive of their sequence solely in terms of a constant, gradual progress of revelation and a

growth in internal coherence, or can one admit of possible diminutions, contradictions and pluralism within this multiform process?

Behind such queries there lurks one fundamental question: how do we conceive of God's intervention in the history of humankind, giving it a message to be understood, at least potentially, by all? Do we have to think of a particular irruption without any human mediation, or can we conceive of it in terms of a mediation in and through the 'humanity' of particularly chosen people ('prophets' and others, individuals or groups), thinking of a gradual emergence of the message by 'inspiration'?

### 3. *Systematic theology*

(a) An updated prophetology would consider the place given to the prophets in both traditions and would specify the role and mission of the prophets in the history of salvation. A convergence might emerge concerning, above all, such themes as the need of humankind for prophets and for prophethood; the type of knowledge communicated by them; the nature of prophethood and its signs; the content of the prophetic message, and whether we have to do with mere repetition of the self-same message or with true growth; the place of miracles in the prophet's life and the value of miracles for proving the prophet's mission; the distinctive difference between the messages of outstanding prophetic figures like Abraham, Moses, Job, Jesus, etc.; the comparison between 'prophets of history' and 'prophets of faith'; the role of the 'community of faith' and of the disciples as 'place' where the tradition is integrated and purified—despite tendencies towards degradation; the meaning of such concepts as 'perfection' or 'completion' and 'closing' of prophethood.

A further crucial question concerns the possibility of an "extra-biblical prophethood", with or without links with biblical history and biblical scriptures. It is in the context of this question that Christian theology will have to explain its stand on the issue of the "prophetic character of Muhammad" in simple terms: whether Muhammad was or was not a genuine prophet, and if so, with what qualifications. Can Muhammad be given a place comparable to that of figures like Joshua or Solomon or other even more outstanding Old Testament figures, and be viewed in the full light of the Christ of the Gospel, thus becoming relevant to Christian faith? If so, what would follow from this regarding the theological place of the Quran and its use in Christian prayer life, especially the liturgy?

(b) Regarding Jesus of Nazareth, Muslims challenge us to refine the proofs for the historicity of his death and resurrection. A Christian Christology for Muslims would develop the various dimensions of his prophethood and, taking into account the Christology of the Quran, would let shine forth the signs or proofs of his being 'more than a prophet'. The Quranic Mary and Jesus, among other Quranic figures, are privileged by being closely related to the 'word' and the 'spirit'. The Quranic Jesus, especially, somehow participates in the attributes of the eternal word. A reflection on the Muslims' 'God who speaks' will distinguish between the One who speaks as it were in Himself, the personal Word (*kalām-i-nafsi*), and the Word He transmits to humankind (*kalām-lafzī*).

(c) In the face of the Muslims' tendency to conceive of God's unity as an almost mathematical, rational oneness, Christian theology will endeavour to explain why it understands this unity as rather a unity of life, so that this one and same unity is lived by three 'persons' (in the classical, not in the modern sense of person/personality). Christian theological language will have to be sensitive to Muslim difficulties with the sort of religious discourse on God and the Holy Trinity that can easily be taken as expressing a kind of tri-theistic belief.<sup>2</sup> Both Christian and Muslim theologies must preserve and revive a keen sense of the 'mystery of God and His will'. Further, is God sufficiently described as Creator, Legislator and Rewarder? Would He have nothing to reveal about Himself to man and women created and appointed to be His "caliphs on earth"? All this underlines the importance of the properly understood concept of analogy for a renewal of our language about the Holy Trinity and the proper awareness of the inherent limits of any language concerning the mystery of God.

(d) It is obvious that the doctrine of creation is of central importance for developing a Christian theology meaningful for Muslims. It is worth stressing that creation, as God's freely-willed act, is an expression of Divine Love. Does not the transcendent God, by the very act of creation, express his will to establish a permanent link with the contingent human person, especially when He has appointed his creature as a "privileged witness"? And what is, in the light of God's forgiveness and mercy, the nature of salvation promised to man? Why do Muslims conceive of man's final, eschatological state as

2. Cf. in this context Karl RAHNER, 'God's Oneness and Trinity', *Vidyajyoti*, 46 (1982), pp. 366-79.

'proximity' to God and Christians as a true 'sharing' in divine Life itself?

(e) This last point is linked with the respective teaching of Muslim and Christian theology on the working of God's Spirit in history. We seem to have here a common ground for a reflection on the meaning and mutual relationship of nature and grace. Furthermore, what function do both theologies assign to the Spirit's role of unifying and gathering humanity into a true unity? The prophets are, according to Muslim faith, 'inspired' and the true believers 'touched' by the Spirit. Christian theology speaks of grace, Muslim theology of the 'favours of God'. Christian theology when speaking of the believer's 'participation' in divine life, will have to specify that such participation is realized by way of similitude, and not of identity.

#### 4. *Moral theology*

In this area it will be the chief endeavour of Christian theology in a Muslim context to explain in depth what is the origin of law and of ethical values. To put it roughly, Muslim thinking tends towards an extrinsic view of law and values, viewing them as based on positive divine legislation. By contrast, Christian theology derives law and values rather from the created signs of nature and stresses their intrinsic character. A Christian theology of human rights, for instance, will show them as anchored in the created natural order, elucidated and fulfilled in Christ, and not just in the order of the positive revelation of the Quran and Tradition.

Muslims not rarely find fault with the Christian moral doctrine as lacking efficacy in the concrete political order. They detect in it a kind of 'moral sentimentalism' or 'ethical angelism'. What is the authentic and realistic relation between the moral ideal and its realisation in concrete political life? Christian liberation theology has recently made us more sensitive to the question of how faith and power should rightly relate, and how tolerance can go together with an effective commitment to bringing about just structures in society.<sup>3</sup> The common task of building up a truly pluralistic society implies practising together similar values whilst basing ourselves on differing foundations. The Christian theologian in an Islamic context will like to discern, together with Muslims, what elements in Quranic and later

3. Cf. in this context A.A. ENGINEER, 'On developing Liberation Theology in Islam', *Islam and the Modern Age* (New Delhi), 13 (1982), pp. 101-25.

Islamic doctrine can provide a basis for developing a humanistic, and at the same time God-centred, commonly shared ethical framework.

### 5. *Spiritual theology*

The best of the mystical traditions of Islam and Christianity wrestled with the question as to how the love of God and the love of fellow creatures can be convincingly presented as belonging intrinsically to one another.

Furthermore, how does Christian theology account for the fact that countless Muslims have experienced what they have called the 'unity of existence', where the 'I' of the believer drowns as it were in that of God? Others have reached, according to their own testimony, a 'union of love' in the 'union of witness', knowing themselves to be sent—in the very movement towards the Absolute—to the service of God's creatures, thus some how imitating God's own descending love as Benefactor and Creator. Some of the Muslim mystics very clearly came to teach and practice universal charity. Must they not be seen in line with the great Christian saints, mirroring traits of the person of Jesus?

The Sufi experience of a Oneness and Plurality in this 'union of friendship' seems to the Christian to carry at least traces of an analogy to the mystery of the Trinity. Maurice Borrmans puts it thus: "Does the testimony of the Christian Mystics re-read in the light of a Muslim problematic, permit us to ask whether, finally, at the summit of mystical experience, the Muslim and the Christian have to do either with 'the Mystery of three persons leading into their Unity' or with that of their 'Unity expanding in the three persons'."<sup>4</sup>

### 6. *Final remarks*

From which points of common perception could and should a Christian theology for Muslims and with Muslims be developed? One approach would be to start from the belief in God as Creator, common to Muslims and Christians, and to show how God as Creator, Revealer, Sufferer and Saviour marks as it were a movement of His 'descent', in a merciful and forgiving love. Man, correspondingly, would be analysed as creature, receiver, sinner in self-will and as man in salvation. And two basic imperatives would emerge: 'Let God be God!' and 'Let Man be Man.'<sup>5</sup>

4. M. BORRMANS, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

5. Cf. K. CRAGG in *Christian Presence and Witness in Relation to Muslim Neighbours*, Geneva (WCC, 1981), pp. 6-16.

Another approach would be to begin with the figure of 'Isa' Jesus and to show how, historically, he was indeed a prophet, realizing the qualities the Quran would attribute to him. Then one would show how, gradually, he acted and spoke in such a way that his reality could no longer be adequately expressed in terms of prophethood. How it was very difficult, even for those closest to him, to accept Jesus for what he truly was, namely, for more than a prophet. How it needed the experience, in the Spirit, of the Risen Lord to grow gradually into a deeper understanding of Jesus' reality and its meaning in terms of personal existence, community and universal history.

I, personally, would like, in the line of K. Rahner's basic approach, to start with the philosophical and theological analysis of man as the questioner and listener who, beyond all particular answers, questions ever further and thus is always already confronted, in awareness or not, with the Absolute Mystery, called God, which he realizes as the ultimate ground and horizon, encompassing inevitably his existence. This Absolute Mystery can then be perceived as the creative ground of Being and as the 'Speaking', 'Communicating' Ground, conditioning what we identify in history as revelation and prophethood. Jesus will be presented here as the 'point in time' and the 'place' where the Absolute Mystery becomes 'palpable', present, assuming solidarity with the world of humankind, the 'point in time' where question and answer meet in one person, Our Brother.

Others, well-versed in Hindu-Christian and Sarna theology, will be able to point out how we can give place to the concerns of a Muslim-Christian theology, as indicated here, within a more comprehensive and complex framework for a meaningful theology in India.

# Note

## "New and Old" Catechism

A commission has been appointed to elaborate a universal catechism, to which two eminent representatives of India have been nominated. This is a welcome sign of an opening to diverse spiritual cultures and traditions of our world.

I. For people accustomed to teach slum youth, a catechism, old or new, poses many problems. It is necessary to awaken their moral sense: "Thou shalt not steal"—but for them, constant hunger pushes them into "temptation". It may be urgent to relieve this hunger and ward off resentment by begging for them some milk powder or other kinds of charitable relief, including education and self-development. But it is also overridingly important, following the example of men like Cardinal Cardijn, to rebuild their sense of basic dignity as human beings and as children of God. A catechism would lack credibility in their eyes if it does not insist on the social background of "stealing"—social justice. After all, they know that billions are stolen as a matter of routine from the international community: from the society of men and women who, whatever their race, creed, caste, class or other differences, have to live together as children of Our Father in Heaven.

II. For counsellors engaged in directing poor and simple couples, the catechism can bring tormenting moral problems. It is indeed consoling to see that at least in India many young people readily and inwardly accept the strict Catholic doctrine on family planning. It is edifying to witness at once their practical common sense and their loving idealism when the basics of natural family planning are explained to them. But it is also essential to face with them the problem of over-population (aggravated by extravagant spending on armaments) as it relates to the education of their children. The teaching of the Gospel on these matters cannot be evaded in an adult catechism. Its credibility depends on it: families are not raised in a vacuum.

III. For priests who have to form the conscience of their communities through the Sunday preaching and other forms of direct evangelization, it is absolutely necessary to insist on the Beatitudes, the Gospel of the poor in spirit, and on a certain detachment from riches, ambition, fame and power. We follow Jesus in the temptations of a worldly existence. It is essential to bring in the enthusiasm of the Spirit so as to liberate each person from within and lead all to the joy and freedom of the children of God. Such freedom may not be abused. It must be directed towards a concern for others and

works of mercy. It is the priest's unrelenting task to form a community, warm-hearted and forgiving of each other.

But all would be of no avail if the social and human aspects of this liberation and charity were bypassed. Individual habits need to be cultivated—a healthy mind in a healthy body—and we must affirm clearly that some habits can be intrinsically evil and need to be healed. But social habits (customs, laws, economic structures) also have to be formed. We must declare without hesitation that social habits also can be intrinsically evil, such as slavery, bonded labour, excessive dowry, bride-burning, etc., and that they also are in need of healing and change—or, often, of radical rejection. For a catechism directed to evangelization, these matters may simply not be bypassed.

IV. Christian social workers (they abound in all forms) need to find an inner inspiration, for their apostolate among the masses and the millions of the underprivileged, in a safe, solid and spiritual vision which the catechism must propose. The basically just and loving community of Equals which the blessed Trinity IS, gives orientation and dynamism, through Jesus Christ, to the communities of committed brothers and sisters aspiring to be assumed into God as a Communion of Saints: Three in One, One in Three. It is the Holy Spirit who constitutes the interior bond of love between human persons, in and through freely willed social structures, and He binds these persons in freedom and love.

For their perseverance amidst the strife of conflicting forces, it is imperative that social workers receive the direction of the Spirit through the Church and its social teaching, which the universal catechism must present at least in a concise form. With this help, they will be able to discern creatively in their own circumstances the best and most efficient means whereby people may have Life, and have it in abundance, in the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Above all, these Christian social workers (politicians not excluded) need the firm and unflinching support of a Christian Manifesto which the catechism has to enshrine. The basic human rights to live, to enjoy freedom and peace, to work with dignity, to be creative in God's creation, have to be seen as supported by the Gospel in clear unequivocal terms, no less than the right of property. The right to defend oneself, specially in courts of law (of State or Church) should also be recognised more firmly. In our times, dictatorships, even religious ones, are on the rise and social workers are the first victims—in East and West, North and South. Let the catechism be a word of solidarity.

V. The sages have always been the main support of the human spiritual strife. Not just the theologians and philosophers, but the artists and novelists and all searcher of Wisdom—the "Magi". They are in need of peace, freedom and means of communication. All the great advances and all renewal in the fields of Scripture, Liturgy,



Social Ethics, Marriage and, not least, Lay Apostolate have been made by these persons, too often in spite of short-sighted bureaucracies inside or outside the Church. A universal catechism should not stifle this important dynamism of the Spirit by a lopsided presentation of the role of authority. It should also positively indicate the presence of the Spirit among such people, because the Spirit blows where it wills. The Spirit is a free gift from the Father, in Christ Jesus.

The "Magi" came from afar, and Wisdom is not, even now, the exclusive property of the Latin Church. Science too is a search for Wisdom even in the laboratories of chemistry and biology. All these have to be infused with the Spirit from above, in the humble, useful way of service to all people which is the characteristic of Jesus. The catechism, in this field, must be able to form a faith which is at once secure and open to others in sincere dialogue, in search of Wisdom. A universal catechism cannot ignore in its principles the eternally vibrant search for Wisdom of the Human Race. Will it quote Confucius, Mohammed and so many other "Magi" of our, by now international, community...?

VI. Some twenty-five years ago, I was surprised to hear from an old priest who had been responsible for a splendid and solid series of catechisms that it is not very important to teach the Mystery of the Trinity: "One God suffices!" Modern catechetical and scriptural advances have changed this outlook. But at the base of it is a greater and deeper problem, a problem of epistemology: the way the human being reaches reality. In our days the great challenge is, in every field of human life, how to reconcile unity and diversity. They appear to be at war and the Church does not seem to be clear about it.

The Presbytery of St Teresa's, Calcutta, where I write these notes, is situated in the area of some of the most furious communal riots of the time of partition. The present Parish Priest was then a boy of the Parish and can still give graphic details, more horrendous than those described in the film *Gandhi*. Behind the political and economic forces which engendered those riots there remains a great problem: Is God One (Muslim faith)? Is God One-and-Many (Hindu faith)? It is the same problem of unity and diversity. To solve it one needs to delve into another basic question: what is Mediation?

We do not want philosophy in a catechism. Yet the science of communication shouts out to us the most modern dogma: "The *medium* is the message." To Church people this smacks of heresy. Yet it was already clear to St John: "The *Word* is God." Mediation is the basic problem of modern philosophy and of all "dialectics"—Hegelian, Marxist or Existentialist. Mediation is present in the International scene—in practice, the Third World. Will the catechism miss this dimension proper to our faith?

VII. In the old catechism there still were some traces of the

Augustinian tradition of Memory as a spiritual faculty (principle of action). Memory, Intelligence and Will were still said to be the natural images of the Blessed Trinity. Memory and Hope were still put together. The Confessions of St Augustine are still illuminating on the subject and in his tradition Memory, as a key function of the spiritual dynamism essential to reach Reality, has remained a strong component of many spiritual paths. After all, the Word who is both the message (Gospel) and the Son, tells us: The Father remembers you. The first call is to remember. It is the call of the Father to the prodigal son among the pigs: "It was better in my Father's home."

The trouble came with the adaptation of Western theology and philosophy to the Aristotelian approach: factual, experimental, almost purely objective, so that Memory has been gradually depreciated and reduced to the function of a computer-type of data-storing. It is not difficult to prove, metaphysically and otherwise, that Memory is the necessary mediation and mediator between Intelligence and Will. Memory is the creative perception of reality. Its formal object is beauty, a transcendental. Incidentally, transcendental beauty is the core of Indian culture (cf. the dance of God in the dance of the Universe). Memory's specific act is an act of presence. In the created universe Memory is at all levels the active principle of inter-relationship of persons through the signs it creates. Through signs, Memory finds the past in the present, for the future. In its basic act, Memory is presence, presence of mind, attention in face-to-face relationships. It is above all, in the Absolute, the very necessity of Being to be shared, which eternally reconciles in God Unity and Diversity. God remembers us through his Sign, Jesus, but also through his many other signs in the history of humanity and its search for Wisdom. Surely a catechism cannot forget memory or black out the signs.

VIII. The Memorial is a sign: in the community it makes the past present, for the future. It is the sign of a Covenant: an exchange, in view of free sharing, staying together in peace, living a social contract in love, justice and freedom, with the Absolute immanently present. The Eucharist is obviously the main Memorial of Jesus for his Church in today's world. Old or new, a catechism is always centered on this sign of the Covenant. But its aspect of sign, Memorial, Covenant, active presence of the Lord in the community, has not been sufficiently brought forward. "Do this in memory of me" has not been sufficiently perceived as the stable gift of Christ's own double memory (his creaturely perception of reality, his exercise of being "Son-of-God-made-man-to-be-shared"), inside the memory of the ordained priest.

The sign of this active covenant inevitably effects the community, as St Augustine already so aptly remarked and as Jesus had already told his disciples: "You will be my disciples if you love one another." What is really important, especially in our days, is that this sign, the Eucharist, forms a "collateral" community, made up of members "from the side", equal, subordinate only to the one goal and to the

one Source, always creative, always living together a life of faith, hope and love, from the Father with the Lord, in the Spirit. This does not exclude authority guidance, the jurisdiction of those who, linked through signs to the past Apostles, have received a full share of Christ's memory. But we remember that Christ is active at the base, in the basic communities round the priests.

The active participation from the base will never be operational in the Church unless our catechisms recognise explicitly this Collaterality (a better and more proper concept than subsidiarity). However great our respect for divine authority bestowed to some in the Church must be, Christ alone who is God's Memory in God, made human Memory among us, is the Lord and he is directly active in this central sign of the Covenant: the Eucharist and its basic community. Diversity and unity are preserved (and this accounts for collegiality) and equality affirmed. A catechism can become truly universal if it respects in its methods, doctrine and principles the creativeness of the Lord in the creativeness of the basic communities and their multiplicity of cultures. This is the meaning of *koinonia*, Communion.

The catechism will thus show respect for all the other signs of Christ in our world today. When a little Hindu girl plucks a flower in the field to offer it to the village deity, she makes one of the most beautiful, sincere and simple signs of true worship in which, however mysteriously, Christ is present and active. When our Muslim brothers sacrifice a kid for the Id-ul-Fitr, is not the Lamb of God somehow present among them? "Do this in Memory of me."

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" . . . and the sap is the Spirit of Love.

E. PAMPFER, S J.\*

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# Book Reviews

## Theology

**Aquinas, Calvin and Contemporary Protestant Thought. A Critique of Protestant Views on the Thought of Thomas Aquinas.** By Arvin Vos. *Exeter, Pater Noster Press*, 1985. Pp. xvii-178. £ 9.95.

This is an interesting book. A Christian philosopher of the Calvinist tradition writes on Thomas Aquinas. Vos is aware that many Protestants are allergic to Aquinas. He believes that this is because they do not really understand him, and in fact often misunderstand him because of the anti-scholastic tradition which they have inherited. Vos brings Aquinas into dialogue with Calvin, principally on the question of faith, and endeavours to show that sometimes both agree (though their approaches differ); sometimes Aquinas identifies an issue that Calvin has missed; and sometimes what Aquinas has to say is better than what Calvin says. The book contains seven chapters and two excursuses. Vos begins by comparing and contrasting what Aquinas and Calvin have to say about faith. He then moves on to the topic of implicit faith and the distinction between formed and unformed faith. This raises the question whether Aquinas was an "evidentialist" or a "fideist". (Vos is using these terms as they are defined by Nicholas Wolterstorff. Briefly, the first holds a conviction is on the basis of evidence; the second goes outside evidence). The fourth chapter deals with the scope of faith. In this Vos deals extensively with the *praeambula fidei* and how Protestants misconceive Aquinas' meaning. In the next chapter he addresses himself to the proposition "God exists" as "believed" and as "known". He deals here also with the question of natural theology. Chapter six deals with the question of nature and grace, another area where Aquinas has been misinterpreted by Protestants. Chapter seven expresses Vos's appreciation of Aquinas and his relevance for today. There is one excursus on Wolterstorff, Aquinas and Foundationalism—something akin to what St Thomas means by the intuition of first principles. A second excursus

deals with Calvin and Natural Theology.

The book is clearly written and clearly argued by an author who is obviously devoted to Truth. Seminary libraries and the book shelves of ecumenists will profit by having this book.

Roman Lewicki, S.J.

**Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today.** By James J STAMOOLIS, *Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1986. Pp. xiv-194. \$ 18.95.

This book is the tenth of a series that is sponsored jointly by Orbis Press and the American Society of Missiology. The aim of the series is to publish high quality scholarly works on missiological themes. There are no denominational, national, or disciplinary barriers. Theologians, historians, anthropologists, artists—almost anyone is free to write.

The present book is certainly of a high scholarly standard. It is also a path-breaking study because, as the author himself mentioned, there is really not heretofore anything like a formal missiology among the Orthodox. There is mission and there is thinking and writing (and living) about witness and mission, but not a formal field of scholarly systematizing. This work may well be the pioneer Orthodox treatise on missiology.

The author, as far as I can make out, is a layman born in South Africa of immigrant Greek parents. It was in South Africa that he did his mission work and took his doctorate in theology from the University of Stellenbosch. He begins his book with two chapters that introduce the reader to the Orthodox Church and to its approach to theology.

He draws a rather sharp contrast between what is styled the "legalistic" approach of the West (whether Catholic or Protestant) and the "mystical" approach of the East. We have heard this before. Stamoolis's merit is to support the point with reasons, not just to assert gratuitously that things are so. Nor does he bandy about clichés. He is penetrating and critical about his own tradition as well; and fair to the authors whose position he discusses. However, it did seem to me that there is a somewhat polemical

tone in his development of the topic. One of the points that struck me very much is the rather bumptious conviction of the Orthodox that they are the only one true church of Christ. The wounds of history do not seem to heal easily.

The next four chapters (3-6) give some of the background history of orthodox missions, starting from Sts Cyril and Methodius and stretching to Orthodox mission work in Africa today. The author covers Byzantine missions, Russian missions and deals with the mission to Japan, China, and Korea. I do not think many non-Orthodox know about all this activity so I think that most readers will find new and interesting material here. The next four chapters deal with the aim, methods and motives of mission from the Orthodox perspective. One of the methods is just the Orthodox presence in the diaspora.

The next chapter (11) treats the liturgy in Orthodox missiology. Not unexpectedly it is the longest chapter in the book. Liturgy is seen as the motivation, method, and aim of mission. All of this is seen to flow from the fact that the church, as a corporate body, is meant above all to worship God. "Any exploration of Orthodox missionary thinking inevitably must arrive at a consideration of Orthodox ecclesiology" (p. 103). This Stamoolis develops in chapter 12. Here part of the argument is that what happened to the Western church was that it failed to preserve "the early Church's conception of itself as a community in communion with God" (p. 106). This he has taken from Zernov and points out well. It seems to me, that Zernov meant not to castigate the Western churches, "but, rather, to show a way forward in the problem of Christian discussion" (*ibid.*).

Chapter 13 on The Missionary Nature of the Church picks up some points not fully developed in the chapters on history and on method. Here he wants to spell out in greater detail how the Church is involved in missionary work. Orthodoxy hardly knows such things as missionary orders; it is the local congregation that is the main missionary congregation and the bishop who sends out missionaries. In the Epilogue the author asks some questions which are challenges facing present-day Orthodoxy. "Are resources being channeled to the work of evangelization and mission?... How can the claims that the Orthodox Church make

be true, if more effort is not invested in carrying out the discipling envisioned by its Lord?... Can Orthodoxy break out of its cultural mentality so that it can witness?" (128-129).

The whole book is very systematic and quite lively. It shows what lay theologians can give the Church. It also shows what a great contribution the Eastern churches can make to the missionary effort of the Church here in our own India also. Seminary libraries at least should have this book. If it finds a place on the desk or bedstand of Oriental and Latin bishops, God will be praised.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

*Nilavai Thedum Vaanam*, by S. ARUL-SAMY. Bangalore, Pontifical Seminary, 1985. Pp. xiv-163. Rs. 12.50.

In this book in Tamil Dr S. Arulsamy shares his theological reflections on Faith and Revelation. This is primarily based on the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II. It is a scholarly elucidation of the Constitution rendered in a simple style for Tamil readers.

The sky, however great and lofty it is, needs the moon to reveal itself at night. Likewise it is in revealing Himself to man that God becomes Revelation itself. His glory and majesty are seen in the context of this revelation. That is why the author has aptly chosen the title, *Nilavai Thedum Vaanam* ("The Sky that looks for the Moon").

The book has two parts. The first part deals with the nature of Divine Revelation. Basing himself on the Constitution, the author tackles in simple and clear terms the following questions: What is divine revelation? What are its special and structural features? How does the goal of revelation embody itself in action? Also in consonance with the Council, Jesus is presented as the One who perfects revelation by fulfilling it through His whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself through His death, glorious resurrection and the sending of the Spirit of truth which are the culmination of revelation.

The second part explains the transmission of divine revelation to us through sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. It emphasizes that the transmitted revelation ought to be accepted in faith. The author agrees that revelation is an ongoing, historical event. It would have

made his book more valuable if he had added some reflections on how God reveals Himself in contemporary history and its socio-economic, political and religious events.

The book is a valuable contribution to the Church in Tamil Nadu. Dr Arul-samy had already the experience of writing earlier four theological books in Tamil. In this book he also succeeds in presenting lofty reflections in a simple and readable style. It will appeal to the common man as well as students and professors of theology. Such contributions will surely help the Tamils come to grips with the theology of today.

S.I. RAJ, S.J.

*God en het Lijden, Een Indische Theodicee.* By Dr George CHEMPARATHY. *E.J. Brill, Leiden.* 1986. Pp. 43. n.p.

This is the inaugural lecture addressed to the staff and students of the University of Utrecht on the occasion of the author's official assumption of the post of Professor Ordinarius for Indian Philosophy. The lecture deals with the Indian answer to the problem of theodicy, based mainly on the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika texts, with occasional references to mediaeval Christian answers.

*People of God—A Plea for the Church.* By Anton HOUTEPEN. *New York, Maryknoll, Orbis,* 1984. Pp. xiii-210. \$ 10.95.

This book on the Church is a valuable contribution on the present state of the contemporary Christian ecclesial community. The critical analysis the author makes will spur others to reflect creatively on the life of the Church. Anton Houtepen pleads for a Christian Church that looks towards the future, a Church that lives as the "people of God," a Church that chooses the way of Jesus without belittling other systems of religion, a Church which is moved by the Spirit, a Church defined in terms of grace and calling rather than as an institution, and finally a Church that embodies the quest for the Kingdom of God.

The author begins by examining the grave crisis that has hit the Western Church and caused a decline in commitment. Christianity, today, seems to have lost its punch and has by and large become a docile religion, a Sunday religion. It began, however, as a movement of utmost strangeness. The Church which

for a few centuries was a minority Church, an underground Church, a catacomb Church, a movement of dissidents, slowly began to lose its original impulse and inspiration and became a great Church, a majority Church, a state Church, a Church protecting capital riches and the status quo, and a Church that was oppressive, a dominating culture.

For the sake of the future of the Church, the author judges that it is imperative that some of the original inspiration be regained and a new ecclesiological order be sought in the face of various influences which have affected the modern Church. Houtepen devotes the first few chapters to what he considers to be the key elements in this order, namely, a common search by all Christians for a contemporary belief in God, a new interpretation of the Jesus event and a new experience of the Church as a community of the disciples of God's Spirit. The specificity of the Christian belief in God is determined by Jesus of Nazareth. Christians seek to embody his style of belief in God and service of God (vision and praxis) in their lives. Jesus updates the Jewish belief in Yahweh by his own unique 'Abba' experience. Jesus himself enters the reality of God in such a way that from now on belief in God is intimately related to the fate of Jesus of Nazareth. The message and ministry of Jesus, as recapitulated in the NT, reflects a strong and lively belief in God. Jesus never spoke about the intrinsic nature of God but always about his relationship towards people and how people must relate to him. The "Will of God" and the "Kingdom of God" are an essential part of Jesus' belief in God and thus also of the specificity of the Christian belief in God.

Further, this *Abba* experience of the Christian people has reference to the Spirit of God. Just as the Spirit of God rested on Jesus making him the anointed of God, so also the Spirit rests on the people of God making them a messianic people. In a section titled, 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord', the author discusses the meaning of Christian salvation in the context of the Church. Salvation has been achieved objectively—death has been overcome, peace has been made with God. But this reality has to be achieved subjectively in human life relations. This salvation is experienced sacramentally in the Church as she invites Christians to active discipleship in Jesus in order to historicize this salvation.

In the rest of the book, Houtepen sets up a possible framework according to which this new ecclesiological order could be created. Any proposed ecclesiology for today will necessarily have to tackle the problem of the divided Church and the unity that the people of God are called upon to realize. With this we come to one of the strengths of the book. Houtepen himself is a widely recognized ecumenist and his treatment of the call of the people of God to unity is authoritative. In his approach to the unity of the Church, he shows more concern about the content and functions of the Church's confession, its sacraments, discipline and its ministry than with forms, offices and institutions. For any ecumenical view of the Church, consensus and agreement particularly on these four aspects of Church life seem imperative. Houtepen's effort to lay bare the essential points of agreement among Christians on the much controverted topics like baptism, eucharist, Christian discipline and ministry is certainly of great value for our reflection on the possibility of the unity of the people of God. In the concluding chapter, Houtepen deals with models of unity within the ecumenical movement, the role of the bishop of Rome in a world-wide communion of sister churches, and how far the one, universal Church, united together into one community of faith and service, could make a contribution to the unity of the world-society.

Houtepen's exploration of the Christian ecclesial community is made all the more valuable by his scholarly handling of Scripture and of Christian intellectual tradition. While this would certainly be a book worth reading during a course on the Church or on ecumenism, I think an Indian reader would have to supplement Houtepen's insights with a theology of religions. Though he is certainly open in his approach to non-Christian religions, he perhaps does not show sufficient concern both for the many outside the Christian Church who search for God and strive authentically to give account of the hope which is in them, and the possibility of collaboration with them in the mission of the Church which is the mission of humanity. However, in the scope of this book, I think, Houtepen achieves his purpose which is to draw up "provisional ecclesiology" that will provide building material for an ecumenical vision of the church, and that

the 'people of God' will find in this approach an invitation to learn to come together again as the Church, so that finally the vision of God can shine out for all who seek him and there can be growth in the one true *ekklesia* which God himself calls to stand before his face" (p. 186).

Lino SANTOS

**On Human Dignity. Political Theology and Ethics.** By Jurgen MOLTSMANN. London, SCM Press Ltd, 1984. Pp. xiv-225. £ 8.50.

Jurgen Moltmann, the author of *Theology of Hope* and one of the leading theologians of Europe, presents, in this collection of essays on human dignity, theological perspectives and reflections which contribute towards an ethic of human rights, a sense of responsibility for the world, a critique of religion and a political theology. Human dignity would sum up the fundamental meaning of being human. While it refuses all narrow ideological definitions Christian theology affirms human dignity as the source of all moral principles and the norm of all human acting and deciding. Moltmann presents his reflections as an embodiment of the hope and of the coming of God's Kingdom.

In the first part of the book Moltmann offers a theology of human rights based on human dignity. Human dignity is rooted in God's creativity, his faithfulness to creation and his claim on the human being. Human rights spring from human dignity. Historically, human dignity cannot flower fully without the awareness of human rights. But today, many in the Third World are not satisfied with the language of human rights. It smacks of liberal capitalism. The reality of the Third World demands a new order of society based on justice, brotherhood and the equal dignity of all. In the liberation from marginalisation and oppression and in the movement for freedom and justice, all basic human rights are taken care of. For this reason Moltmann may be misunderstood. But the perspectives he presents transcend the liberal capitalist views of human rights. He puts human rights within God's work for the righteousness of the Kingdom and his saving history. Human beings, created in the image of God, are called to represent God in creation. When human rights are observed

and protected, people are faithful to this mission. The Reformed tradition considers the teaching of *Imago Dei* as the basis of human dignity and the source of human rights. While in Roman Catholic tradition the central point of reference is the light of the Gospel. The mystery of the human being becomes clear only in the mystery of the Word incarnate.

Moltmann's fundamental orientation in theological reflection is hope. Hope in God's eschatological promises, symbolised by the Kingdom, influences all the themes Moltmann has taken up for discussion. In his introduction to the volume Meeks does not point out this basic perspective. Probably he takes it for granted. Christian hope is a transformative hope and an operative principle of Christian and human action.

Speaking of the right to work, Moltmann lays stress on the right to a work that is humane. The right to work must refer to meaningful work. To understand human work, Moltmann takes the reader to the Bible to see how God works. Unlike in a slave society, work and virtue, work and freedom, and work and meaning are not separated. God's work of creation and his resting (*sabbath*) teach us what human work should be.

Moltmann discusses work as vocation, work as enterprise, work as achievement, work as participation in God's work. Human work patterned on God's work is not just a means to an end. It is not just product-oriented. In a sense it is an end in itself. Moltmann argues for a "work-oriented" concept of work. Work should be seen as a participation in the social process. Just wages and a share in the fruits of work should enable every citizen to take part in the social process. Work embodies meaning for the person and society. Yet, I must point out, Moltmann's context of theology is the welfare and affluent society of Europe. Hence the stark, poignant reality of immigrant labour, or the exploitation of workers is not the point of departure for his theology of work.

In the second part of the book, Moltmann discusses and institutes a critique of Luther's doctrine of the Kingdoms. In consonance with his theology of justification by faith alone Luther dichotomised the Spirit and force, faith and works, Gospel and law. In the spiritual world there is Word and faith. In the worldly regiment, there is order, peace and law. If the overcoming of the

dichotomy lies in a perspective that brings God's battle against evil and his universal sovereignty over everything, then the worldly regiment must also reveal God's rule. No realm of God's creation can be left godless and to unfaith. The Lutheran approach made faith worldless and the world godless. It made faith retire into introspection and resulted in the schizophrenia of the modern mind. It also lent itself to misuse of the two Kingdoms theory in Hitler's Germany. The autonomy of the worldly sphere is relative. The spiritual realm of God's reign becomes *ordo caritatis* of the worldly regiment. Justice, love, order and peace must be rightly related to each other.

Moltmann critiques Barth's understanding of the Lordship of Christ. One cannot build a Christian doctrine of the state. Rather the Lordship of Christ gives "directives to the political discipleship of Christians but not a metaphysic of the state." It offers political ethics for the Christian. Christ as Pantocrator rules over the Christians and calls them to respond from the standpoint of faith in the earthly domains. Discussing the political hermeneutic of the Gospel, Moltmann explains that it leads to a new praxis of hope, and links promissory history to its realization. This political hermeneutic intends a transformative praxis, rejects pure theory and becomes a messianic ethic. It anticipates and celebrates the presence of God in history. In a pointed discussion on discipleship in a nuclear age, Moltmann argues for a peace Church. Possession of mass destruction weapons for the purpose of deterrence is sin as much as their use, a view more radical than the Roman Catholic Church's. Moltmann thinks that pacifism is the only realism left to us in this apocalyptic situation. Pacifists are the realists of life.

In the third part, Moltmann discusses the Christian criticism of religion. Surveying religion and culture in Europe, he sees in the vicissitudes of history only one possible future: it will be free from the hegemony of one religion or one culture over another. The task is to be human and to achieve what is human. In his essay on "America as Dream" Moltmann examines the great experiment of an ethos and culture full of the promise of unknown possibilities. America may seem to live the messianic dynamic of the provisional. But in all its experiments, the risk and the cost is rootlessness, the



sacrifice of many lives there and elsewhere, in the Third World. We cannot experiment with life, love and death for this would be the death of hope and of new possibilities in these areas. Experiments with star wars, weapons of death, cannot create hope and sustain life. Its price is the diminution of life and death.

Moltmann weaves his theology of hope into his reflections on the Olympic Games, his critique of the messianic atheism of Ernst Bloch, and his plea for a common hope for the Church and Israel in the call to witness to the nations so that all people may sit at the table of the Lord.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

## Religious Life

**Treasures in Earthen Vessels: the Vows. A Wholistic Approach.** By Joyce RIDICK, S.S.C. *New York, Alba House, 1984. Pp. xx-166. \$ 9.95.*

The call given by Vatican II to the religious to return to the sources of their vocation and mission has revolutionised the theology and spirituality of consecrated life. There is no dearth of literature on religious life written in a popular style. But the need of the times is for consolidation of the post-conciliar experience of change and changes. The present book has responded to this precise need.

It is the fruit of long years of research and practical experience, as the author works as a psychologist among vocationers (priests and religious) from all over the world. The book is written in a scientific manner and is based on the insights offered by contemporary philosophers, theologians and psychologists. These insights are integrated into the study of the three evangelical counsels: poverty, chastity and obedience.

The book is divided into three main sections which deal separately with each of the three vows. They are seen from a wholistic point of view, the author showing the integrating dynamic or lack of it as they affect the three levels of psychic life, namely, the psycho-physiological, the psycho-social and the spiritual-rational. The definitions, the uses and abuses of the vows, the means and criteria to personalise them given under each section, make the book quite serious reading on the central aspects of

consecrated life.

Another merit of the book is that at the end of each section dealing with each vow it offers the reader very informative footnotes and a quite elaborate bibliography, useful to keep abreast of the current thinking on consecrated life. The author has succeeded in dealing with a complex topic with competence, shown in the clarity, precision, and forthrightness of her views and reflections. While she has sufficiently and at length emphasised the intra- and inter-personal dynamics related to the vows, their relatedness to societal issues like poverty, justice, etc., has not been taken into account in situating consecrated life in the apostolic context of our times.

A book like this can be of great help in clarifying one's own personal views on consecrated life with particular reference to the vows. For those involved in guiding vocationers, especially those in formation work, the book has an educative value.

JOE MATHIAS, S.J.

**Women Religious: Bearers of Good News.** *Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 1985. Pp. iv-254. Rs 42.50.*

This is the third of a series of four books which contain collections of different articles around the rethinking of what it means to be a woman religious today. These articles are from the U.I.S.G. bulletins 1979-1983 and are reprinted here to make them available to all religious communities in India.

Very pertinent to religious life today, the book touches on many topics which are part of our struggle to be credible as religious in the world. Inserted in the fabric of daily life, women religious face many ambiguities and tensions. The interrelation of Christ, Church and world in our lives is a constant challenge. This is not because our times are more difficult, rather it is because the questions posed are new. There is a new global view on the issues before us, with new limits and new possibilities.

The changes in mission practice and the new understanding of it have raised many questions. Being always on mission, communities are required to adapt to new circumstances, and the ongoing adaptation raises problems in many areas. One of these is the area of unity.

A strong emphasis is laid on numerically small groups, living as closely as

possible to those who live in remote and underprivileged areas. The multiplication of communities has coincided with changes in government structures which were inadequately prepared for this situation. There are consequently questions about the effectiveness of obedience and the mediation of authority. An expectation of the young religious regarding community is that it foster a continual responsiveness to the call for renewal. In reality, the founders of congregations permitted themselves to be questioned by the social problems of the world, and from their faith and the Gospel they sought to give a fresh response. This same Christian reading of reality is demanded by young people today, and they expect coherent answers.

The new way of life and involvement make certain demands on the person. One is called to be creative in unstructured situations, and so divest oneself of upper or middle class attitudes and outlook. Experience shows that difficulties are encountered by the sisters and communities which are involved in new initiatives. A certain intellectual and spiritual poverty is felt, and tensions crop up in the group itself.

A community's primary evangelical task is to radiate the ideals of a sisterhood that is truly lived in the midst of all the imperfections of the earthly situation. In the effort to live the prophetic aspects of proclamation and denunciation proper to the nature of the vows, a community will find a fount of constant renewal and be a sign of the liberating presence of God in our history.

Religious may have been born and lived a great part of their lives in villages, and yet might not have been able to reflect deeply on the root causes of the poverty and injustice that surrounded them. Along with the sociological and theological understanding of salvation history, a study of the situation of the country and of the world are necessary.

While former ways of formation were alienating, the importance of forming strong persons who possess deep convictions founded on faith is more than ever evident. This faith has to be deeply interiorised and centered on the search for identification with Jesus Christ. Such formation emphasises the development of the ability to discern, analyse and synthesize. These help religious to face clearly and serenely the

situations of conflict which they will inevitably meet.

The situation of women in the Church needs updating. Despite pointers in the right direction, women religious today are still considered as second class citizens. This is partly due to the failure of the hierarchy to take into account, in thought and action, the real existence and importance of women in the Church.

The book provides absorbing and inspiring reading. The contributors share their clear ideas with firmness. Religious women have to assume their legitimate role if the Church is to become a sign of freedom and equality among people. The book is highly recommended to all congregations and to the formation personnel of women religious.

Sr Noella DE SOUZA, S.C.J.

### The Church at Prayer

*Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit.* Volume III, Trans. and edit. by Francis ACHARYA. *Vagamon, Kurisumala Ashram*, 1985. Pp. xxxviii-649. n.p.

We are happy to greet the appearance, already one year ago, of the third volume of the *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, which is a selective translation of the Divine Office of the West Syrian Rite. This third volume covers volumes iv and v of the original Syriac edition, a seven-volume collection called the *Penqitho*. The volume bears the subtitle, "The Prayer of Asian Churches". This is an allusion to the fact that of the three great streams of early Christian tradition, the Roman, the Byzantine and the Syrian, it is the last that was the product of Asia and has lived in Asia for all these centuries.

The translation comes at an auspicious moment. When the three particular churches that make up the Catholic Church in India are becoming aware of their distinctiveness, it is important that this does not lead to division but rather to dialogue and to mutual enrichment. An English version of the great liturgical and spiritual tradition of the Syrian Church will make these treasures available to members of other traditions.

The first volume of this collection (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1981, p. 252) covered the ordinary of the weekly office, giving us for every day the evening prayer, the night vigil (in three "watches" and the

morning prayer. The second and third volumes cover part of the liturgical year. Volume II gives us the offices of what the Latin Church calls Advent, the Christmas and Epiphany cycle and the feasts of these months up to February. The present volume covers only the seven weeks of "the Great Fast", including Holy Week up to the Easter Vigil. The only special feast included is the Annunciation on March 25th. Some saints, including St Joseph, are commemorated on Saturdays 1 to 4 of the "Great Fast". For each day the volume translates the evening prayer and the night prayer in four watches, the fourth taking the place of the morning prayer. However for Holy Week special additional "hours" are given, including a morning prayer.

Like its predecessors, the volume is the fruit of more than 25 years of prayer experience in the Kurisumala Ashram. It emerges from a lived tradition, and therefore adaptations are made in the very choice of the texts translated, in the upgrading of some feasts (or even creating new ones, like the feast of St Francis Xavier in Vol. II). Of great interest is the celebration of (Holy) Saturday of Good Tidings as the liturgical memory of Christ's "descent to hell", a mystery so biblical and yet so overlooked by Western theology and liturgy.

We are not competent to assess the value of the translation: but scholarly reviewers of earlier volumes have noted its high degree of fidelity to the original, which presumably continues in this volume. On the other hand the blending of religious texts from the Indian sources attempted in volume I has been discontinued in Volumes II and III.

The ecumenical interest of this venture is manifest by the fact that this volume carries letters of recommendation from the Catholicos of the East of the Orthodox Syrian Church, the Catholicos of the East of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church and the Archbishop and two Bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church. More important still, in my opinion, is the fact that the book places at the service of the universal Church the treasures of spirituality and mysticism which are hidden in texts not easily available to most people. Christians, specially those called to the ministry of prayer, will find in these 600 and more pages a spiritual treasure trove for the seven weeks of

Lent and Holy Week. Many may be enriched by tapping a tradition different from their own.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Consideration on Sunday Readings.** By Rev. Dr John D'SOUZA, *Allahabad, Bishop's House*, 1986. Pp. 239. Rs 25.

This book contains the *Considerations* on the Sunday readings of the three years and Feasts which replace Sundays, which were originally published in the Allahabad Diocesan Monthly.

Normally the length of the Consideration of the 3 readings of a Sunday is one page, a paragraph for each reading. The author gives an idea from each reading, sometimes making a theme for the Sunday, with some explanation of the text on occasions. The approach is simple, exhortative and moral with a high Christology. The author expresses normal Catholic piety and theology. Some priests, lay people and catechists will find stimulus for explaining the Word and for prayer in the book.

P.M. MEAGHER S.J.

## The Church at Work

**Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad.** By Renny GOLDEN and Michael MCCONNELL. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*. 1986. ix-214. \$ 9.95.

This impressive, realistic and painful book documents the rise and growth of that movement among religious communities, Christian and Jewish, which provides "sanctuary" to refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala and leads them from the border of the USA to various centres which have opted publicly to provide sanctuary. The recent juridical condemnation of a group involved in the movement confirms the fears expressed in the book.

The seven chapters open with the direct testimony of individual refugees about their experiences which forced them to flee so as to remain alive. These stories we would wish were not part of our human history. Throughout the book in short paragraphs we are given other glimpses into the brutal human world of those countries.

The initial chapters describe the origin and initial growth of the move-

ment and the legal reaction of the US government. Having introduced us to the movement, the authors succinctly describe the history of US involvement in Central America—a sordid history of economic and political self-seeking often hiding behind a mask of self-righteousness, and the consequent impoverishment and oppression of the ordinary peasant communities and the creation of an autocratic elite.

The next two chapters document the origin and growth and some of the problems within the movement, as well as the growing opposition of the government to the work and objectives of the movement. The book gives little evidence to justify the policy of the US government to deport over 90% of all refugees from these countries who seek temporary refuge and often go back to the real danger of death.

A chapter deals with the clandestine sanctuary church in Mexico. In the US the sanctuary groups publicly declare their intention to offer sanctuary to refugees and transport them. The last three chapters are of particular interest because of the issues raised and treated.

This movement has arisen and grown because of that interaction between a contemporary situation of great human need and the living and searching faith of individual women and men and communities or groups. The authors reflect upon the process of conversion and conscientization within individuals and communities and the process of action and reflection which moves from the provision of sanctuary to the major issue of US involvement in Central America. The refugee problem to a large extent is caused by the policy of the US and the types of military aid given to the governments of the area. The issues of an open opposition and the concrete forms of this opposition to the Government, forces itself on all who are involved.

Another issue which individuals and groups face is the question of the public and "wilful" breaking of the Law and its interpretation by the Courts. At this point and at various places the authors develop the similarities between the present situation and the situation before the abolition of slavery, when runaway slaves were both transported on an "underground railway" to the north and given sanctuary. Both from the point of view of breaking the Law and the larger issues raised by the Christian response to an inhuman situation the present case can be compared with the past.

The final chapter gathers together much of the earlier thought under the themes of solidarity and its implications, and the revolutionary hope which are the gifts of the refugees to the American people. Three appendices are added; the Open Letter to Unitarian Universalist Congregations (1985), the Religious Leaders' Affirmation of the Sanctuary Movement (1985), and a commentary on the Arizona Indictments.

Commenting on this book Harvey Cox wrote, "Rarely in the past has any movement among the churches rung so truly with biblical faith and aroused such ire in the establishment." Though issues will be different in various countries yet the book is a genuine education in the significance of the religious persons' commitment to Faith and Justice. The book is also deeply disturbing as it documents the self-interest and sinfulness of human persons and social structures. How easily do the Christian persons and communities allow massive injustice and the wilful destruction of human life and the quality of life, and remain unaware of or hardened to or fearful of the consequences of a religious faith which demands options and actions within public life against public opinion or sanctioned and structured sinfulness.

P.M. MEAGHER.

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